Week ending December 30 1950 Every Thursday Threepence

# John Bull

NEW REAL-LIFE SERIES BY JEROME WILLIS

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for SOFTER WOOLLENS— BRIGHTER COLOUREDS!

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## Portrait of a wicked man

He's a family man. Lives in a nice house. Children go to a good school. His wife adores him. Holidays every year—birthdays never forgotten. But—he *has* forgotten to make certain his family would be all right if something happened to him. Yes, he has a policy—but so small! He couldn't be bothered to listen to the Refuge representative. Pity. The certain thing in life is uncertainty. . . .

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## EDITORIAL

# 1950's progress must be kept up in 1951

WHATEVER 1951 MAY HAVE in store for us—and it will certainly have its trials and tribulations as well as its Festivals—there is satisfaction in looking back over the astonishing way in which, under very real handicaps, the nation has improved its position in the world during 1950.

In fact, it is the achievements of the last twelve months which have really made it possible for Britain to face great new tests of her strength and courage without flinching.

Napoleon, who is credited with the saying that an army marches on its stomach, might today have declared that a nation's spirit and wellbeing depend on the state of its purse. Our national purse is better filled at this moment than anyone, five years ago, would have believed possible. There is still not much "slack" in it, and we will be forced to cut some of our expenses in order to shoulder the burden of rearmament. But our outlook would have been a great deal worse if we had not somehow managed to square our accounts in the meantime.

Two big events have dominated 1950—one evil and spectacular; the other good but far less dramatic. And it is important not to forget the second one, or let it be completely obscured by the first.

The evil event was, of course, the outbreak of war in the Far East, bringing with it the menace of world war and starting the race to re-arm.

THE good one was the arrival of Great Britain at an approximate dollar balance in her overseas trade. This happened two years earlier than was necessary under the Marshall Aid arrangements, but not a day too early for our comfort and security.

It was hastened by the fact that the sterling area's balance of payments—and Great Britain is the keystone of the sterling area—was improved by the extra demand and prices for its raw materials caused by rearmament.

But it happened mainly because of higher production and bigger exports here at home in Great Britain.

On every major industrial front—even in coal-mining—progress was made. In fact it was so marked that an official reason for the coal shortage was that booming industries had demanded too much coal!

Steel production has continued to go up, despite political wrangles about the industry's future. Motor vehicle firms have broken all records and their exports have been colossal. Onwards and upwards went the figures for pottery and bicycles, leather goods and electrical equipment.

Even when some setbacks and delays are allowed for, the general industrial picture of 1950 is cheering, with full employment maintained and a minimum of disputes and stoppages. Strikes, indeed, were confined almost entirely to unofficial ones organized among groups of key workers, and exploited by the Communists.

ON the land, production was raised and our dependence on imported foods lessened. Every kind of livestock increased in numbers, and the larger flocks and herds are being maintained more and more on home-grown feeding-stuffs.

There is still room for more efficient and intensive farming, and for reclamation of wasted land. But Farmers' Co-operatives and marketing schemes are already being organized for the benefit of the consumer.

Everywhere, what the economists call capital investment has gone on, in spite of the restricted housing programme and the shortages caused by rearmament. Power stations, oil refineries, factories, plant of many kinds have been multiplied. All this means that the nation is "tooling up" successfully—though whether it is to be for peaceful prosperity or a new wartime emergency we cannot yet dare to say.

In more personal ways, too, 1950 has been better than we expected. Although the cost of living rose, and millions felt the pinch of prices not disclosed by the official index, it is a fact that even in the home, some "re-equipment" has been possible.

And what is the prospect for 1951—against a background of vast and shocking world events beyond the control of any British Government?

That prospect, unless it darkens into widespread war, will depend on continuing the progress of 1950 along the same lines—but with even more hard work and self-denial.

In the last weeks of the old year the miners set a fine example by returning to Saturday working. If that example is generally followed, there is every reason to hope that we can keep up our living standards, continue to build recovery, and re-arm into the bargain.

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ON REFLECTION

"How pleasant of gay Mrs. Gay
To send me a flashing 'Good-day'!
Such a bright piece of brass!
–And I note as I pass
That she cleans it the much cleaner way".

BRASSO

*The CLEANER way with brass and copper*

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*The sparkling*

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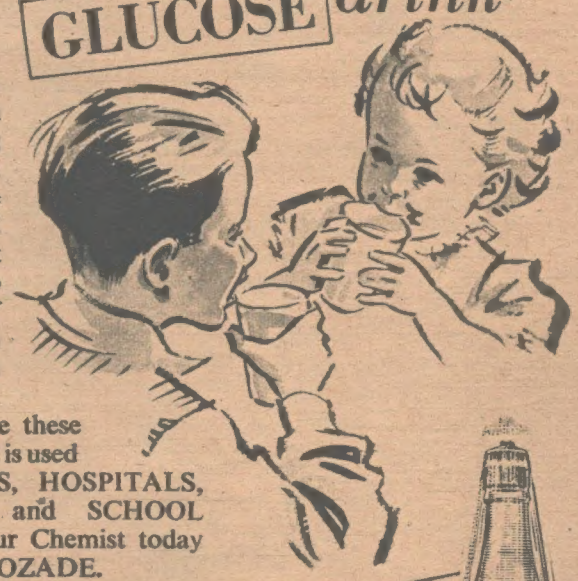

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TBW/52

*SHE* is always borrowing his can of Esso Handy Oil for window fastenings, hinges, sewing machine, pram, and so on, *and forgetting to put it back!*

HE tries to keep it in the garage for his bike and garden tools because it *cleans* and *prevents* rust too.

To end domestic friction, better buy *two* tins of ESSO HANDY OIL. Big 8 oz. can with curved spout: 1/9d. Refills in bottle: 1/6d.

*It pays to say*

Esso

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# FREE SPEECH

## The Russian girl just laughed

WHEN MY SHIP was in a Soviet port recently, I asked a Russian girl if she knew that the rest of the world was afraid of her country. She couldn't have laughed more if I had told her the funniest story of the year. She said that Russia wants nothing but peace, and refused to believe that her country had any direct hand in the Korean business. She did not believe that Soviet weapons bearing a 1950 stamp had been captured there.

According to another Russian to whom I spoke, there are no slave camps in Siberia, which he described as if it were a sort of de luxe Butlin holiday camp.

The tragedy is that these were just plain, good, ordinary people, firmly convinced that they live in the world's most peace-loving country.—JAMES CLARK, Edinburgh.

### Through Smallpox Unscathed

AS ONE WHO, twenty-three years ago, contracted smallpox, I found Don Everitt's reconstruction in JOHN BULL of the recent Glasgow outbreak illuminating. I myself spent seven weeks in hospital, four of them in bed. I had a severe rash on my face, arms and legs, and the treatment included swathing me in cotton wool soaked in olive oil. My bed literally dripped with olive oil. The rash cleared itself in time, and today my skin is quite clear without any sign of a pockmark, although for a few years after the illness my skin became covered with blue and red patches whenever I was cold.

Today doctors whom I consult look at me doubtfully when I say I have had smallpox. Is it unusual to come through this disease with a clear skin?—D. SMITH, 20 Oval Road, Rugby, Warwickshire.

*No, it is not unusual. Most cases of smallpox in the last thirty years have been what is known as "modified smallpox." This leaves little or no pockmarking.*

### Rose Island In Happier Times

WHILE, IN 1909, SERVING in H.M.S. *King Alfred*, then flag-ship of the Far East Squadron, I had the duty of rowing the C.-in-C., Admiral Lampton, on a duck-shooting expedition around Rose Island, and I probably passed the very spot where *Amethyst* ran aground. It is with pride that I read in *Yangtse Incident* of the courage of the men of the Service to which I belonged for eighteen years.—H. J. ATKINS, 25 Crescent Avenue, Coventry.

*Final instalment of "Yangtse Incident" by Lawrence Earl starts on page 16*

### The Suicidal Turkey

CHRISTOPHER MILLER WAS right about the suicidal tendencies of turkeys in his JOHN BULL article (December 2). I used to work on a ranch in Saskatchewan, Canada. One day I was driving a six-horse seed drill past a flock of turkeys. The rattle of the drill frightened the birds. Did they scurry away to safety? No. They charged under the horses' hooves, and five of them were killed.

One December afternoon two of us rounded up some turkeys to get them under cover before nightfall. Three of them were perched in a row on a high roof, and all our efforts to move them failed. During the night the temperature dropped to thirty degrees below zero. In the morning those three turkeys were still on the roof—frozen to death.—F. W. BROOKE, 53 Tylney Road, Sheffield, 2.

### A Boy And His Career

HAVING A SON who will be fifteen in the spring, we face a situation similar to the one described by John May in his article, "Father Tackles The Career Problem." When we ask our son what he wants to do on leaving school, he replies: "I want to play for Arsenal." One thing is certain; youngsters today stand a better chance than ever we had of following their natural bent. But only if, like John May, parents avoid the mistake of treating a boy or girl as "just another wage packet."—MRS. R., Darlington.

### The Super-prefab

IN AUSTRALIA, AS IN BRITAIN, living on the coast all the year round has its problems. The boat-house in the photograph I enclose, which was built up from the stern of an old pearling lugger, is one answer. It is now to be seen on the beach at Francis Bay, Darwin, Northern Territory. A ramp leads up

*The home aboard an old pearling lugger*

to the front door. At high spring tides, the sea surrounds the boat-house, for the tides here have a rise and fall of twenty-eight feet.—J. S. LITCHFIELD, P.O. Box 116, Darwin, Australia.

### Unnerved L-driver

PHILIP HOPE'S ARTICLE, "Lynda Takes Her Driving Test" (JOHN BULL, December 2), certainly handed a horse-laugh to those of us who have been through this charade once or twice.

Consider my situation. I had a car rotting in a garage at 10s. a week. I'd laid out for the insurance, too. I spent pounds on learning how to drive; I read the *Highway Code* till I knew it backwards. My R.A.C.-tested instructor expressed reasonable confidence in me. My present bus-train journey to work takes one-and-a-quarter hours, so a car would mean a great deal to me. And the whole thing depended on forty-five minutes or so with an examiner. To anyone of any imagination, this in itself cannot fail to have a bad effect. It did.

On my first test a bus overtook me on a corner. The examiner made no protest to the bus driver, and I got the impression that coping with a thoughtless bus-driver while driving a small car at 22 m.p.h. was just something I should be able to do. On the second test I was warned that the examiner was a "specialist on corners." This had the effect of making me sway the car drunkenly round corners after slowng down to a ludicrous crawl.

Awaiting my first test I saw an ill-advised gentleman try to lodge a protest because his pupil failed. The examiner looked straight past him with that glassy-eyed stare beloved of petty officials. Most people *daren't* protest.

Twenty-eight, sound in wind and limb and not particularly reckless on the road or off it, I might possibly take another driving test one day—though I've sworn I won't go through the ordeal again.—L-PLATE, London, N.W.10.

. . . Should not all licensed drivers, particularly the elderly, undergo periodical tests? I know a woman of seventy-four who up to nine months ago, drove her car with a "look-out" beside her to warn her of what was ahead. I myself served in this capacity—under protest—several times. Such people should be put off the roads.—MRS. OLIVE CARLIN, Ferndale, Goodchild Road, Wokingham, Berks.

### Someone Else's Crash

THE STARTLING ROAD SAFETY reminders at many French road crossings greatly impressed me during a recent visit. Set on platforms so that they could not be overlooked were some of the most battered cars I have ever seen. These warnings have a very sobering effect on even the most dangerous road hogs. I think our own authorities should copy this idea. One battered car is more effective than 5,000 posters.—A. BALDWIN, Redcliffe Gardens, London, S.W.10.

### Taking Your Rations

MY GRANDPARENTS NEVER visited friends without a little gift of home-made cakes or sweets. They instilled this friendly act into my parents, who in turn instilled it into me. I always take a little something, even if it is half my sugar or margarine ration. Yet never once has the gesture been returned. It seems that the small courtesies of life are despised today.—MRS. V. T., Glasgow.

### Well-loved Welshman

ALTHOUGH MAI JONES wrote the music for "We'll Keep A Welcome" in the *Welsh Rarebit* programme (JOHN BULL, November 25), lyrics were the work of the late, well-loved Lyn Joshua, first full-time radio actor from Wales and the show's original Tommy Trouble. His "Dai's letter to the Forces" brought memories of home to exiled Welshmen.—MRS. DOROTHY PIMINGTON, 12 Bamber Avenue, Bispham, Blackpool.

**John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.**

### *THIS WEEK'S COVER*

"THE Elizabethan four-poster bed I have painted is in my home at Buckingham," says Douglas L. Mays. "To the right, out of sight, is an old fireplace which has a rare Elizabethan twisted chimney—there are only four in the country. Some of my visitors don't care to sleep in the bed but most enjoy it—and so do the children who take turns to sleep there after the visitors have departed."

# The NEW Rowntree's is right...

*Mrs. Aida Foster, Principal of the Aida Foster Stage School, coaches two Babes in the Wood. These two Babes are now being covered with leaves, every night, at the Chiswick Empire!*

## ...for the Principal of a famous stage school

**Auditions, dancing classes, producers' visits, interviews, rehearsals—with often only a snatched meal between—make the life of a Stage School Principal a hard and tiring one**

BEFORE the pantomime season opens, Fairies, Gnomes, Elves, and Babes in the Wood have to put in some hard training. For their teachers in the dancing school, these are busy, strenuous weeks of no rest.

*Such* people find good cause to bless their happy discovery of the new Rowntree's. At last, they feel, a hot, comforting, delicious drink that fits into their scheme of things perfectly. A smooth, creamy cup of the new Rowntree's warms and heartens as nothing else *can*.

That's why Mrs. Aida Foster—when she relaxes—likes to relax at home with a cup of the new Rowntree's. Mrs. Foster makes certain, too, that there's always plenty of this *new* Rowntree's—not just "cocoa"—to be had in the canteen of her famous London stage school. "I don't have to teach my pupils to enjoy *that!*" she says.

THE NEW ROWNTREE'S IS CHANGING PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT "COCOA"

# There's *real* fruit in Cannings Jam

*Ask for it by name next time you order*

L.G.B.

KM

*Miss Ada Emptiplate of Sutton*
*Eats beef or ham, or veal or mutton.*
*Miss Ada eats a meal that's square*
*With two Rennies as an after-care!*

KM

*But what a case is Auntie Ida*
*Who often has a pain inside her . . .*
*Alas, alas . . . ah, lack-a-day . . .*
*She doesn't know the Rennies way.*

## Suck two Rennies slowly, like sweets...to restore acid balance

Too much stomach acid is often the cause of after-meals pain ...but abrupt alkalisation can be equally painful. By sucking Rennies *slowly*, the neutralising agents are gently, quickly, fully absorbed. Drip-by-drip, Rennies restore correct acid balance! If Rennies *don't* relieve your indigestion, *do* see your doctor.

DIGESTIF **RENNIES**

**for happy stomachs**

## No teething troubles *since I bought...*

**Fennings'**
**CHILDREN'S COOLING POWDERS**

For 90 years and more mothers have found Fennings' Children's Cooling Powders a perfect stand-by for all those little upsets brought on by teething . . . and for the ordinary ups-and-downs of childhood. Be mother-wise and always keep a packet in the home ready for immediate use.

Sold everywhere. Packets 1/6 & 3/6 or singly

**Write for a free copy of "Every Mother's Book," full of useful information on bringing up Baby. to Sales Office: J/93*

ALFRED FENNINGS, HORSHAM, SUSSEX

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**MEDICATED TABLETS**

*Obtainable in 5 varieties:*
T.C.L., Sore Throat, Bronchial, Compound Thymol, Pine Catarrh
9d. per packet, or loose at 5d. per oz.
*From Qualified Chemists Everywhere*

# THIS
## Is What I Take for
# INDIGESTION

**MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER**
*Price 1/8, 2/10 and 6/8.*

Yes—MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER quickly relieves indigestion. Keep a bottle always handy and take a dose whenever you are troubled by flatulence, heartburn, nausea, stomach pains, etc. Countless thousands rely on MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER—you can do so with every confidence.
MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH POWDER is also obtainable in handy tablet form.
*Only Genuine if Signed—"ALEX. C. MACLEAN."*

**MACLEAN BRAND STOMACH TABLETS**
*Price 10d., 1/8 and 2/10.*

JB

# MACLEAN Brand Stomach Powder

Stott picked up the chair and walked towards her. The doctor was, for a moment, too petrified to move. Then he did the only thing he could

# LET FREEDOM RING

*by* KEM BENNETT

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

**Eight times the murderer had struck, and eight times the mad slogan was found on the body. In a case like this, a doctor's guess was as good as a policeman's**

WALKING HOME WITH HIS HAT tipped slightly backwards on his head, Doctor Richard Buchanan was quite at peace with the world. He had treated himself to a good and expensive dinner, and though a knowledge of dietetics told him that boiled cod, boiled potatoes and raw cabbage should have produced a feeling of equivalent well-being, he cheerfully and without hesitation consigned dietetics to hell.

In Deanery Street, which is the respectable dog's hind leg of an alleyway running between South Audley Street and London's Park Lane, a derelict sitting in a doorway stuck out a leg and tripped him up. As he rose from the pavement, clutching a sore knee, he was aggravated.

"What the hell!" he said. The guilty leg stuck out stiffly across the pavement. "What the devil do you think you're doing?"

The owner of the leg did not answer. Stooping, Richard took a lighter from his pocket. When the flame lit up the features of the man in the doorway, he stared with suddenly narrowed eyes.

The face was so familiar, it was unreal, like the face of Father Christmas. This face was almost equally famous. It belonged to General Sir Basil Sandeman. The face had stared out of a thousand Press photographs. Sandeman and Eisenhower, Sandeman addressing cadets, Sandeman chatting with the King.

Richard reached forward and touched the head. It lolled forwards, swung sideways once and then became still with the chin on the breast. The movement revealed the handle of a knife buried behind the right ear. With the certainty of a man who knows death as a familiar, Richard straightened his back. No need to feel for a pulse. No purpose in trying to undo what had been so skilfully and murderously done. The knife had been driven far downwards into the little cup behind the collar-bone. It had severed the subclavian artery. Death would have occurred within ninety seconds.

A white card was protruding from the soldier's breast pocket. Doctor Buchanan had read detective stories. He took it out carefully, holding the pasteboard by the edges.

LET FREEDOM RING, the lettering read, ONE LESS TO THREATEN THE WORLD OF MEN.

He drew a deep breath. Another one! That

*Continued on page 27*

*STARTING A NEW REAL-LIFE SERIES*

# The Secret Invasion

*by JEROME WILLIS*

André Dewavrin, brain behind the secret agents

**This is an account of what happens when a resistance movement in an occupied country is organized from outside: the parachute jumps, the furtive rendezvous, the flame that threats and torture could not quench—as it was lit from London by the men of de Gaulle's undercover army**

WITH THE FIRST QUARTER of a pale moon hanging low in the sky behind it, a naval speedboat shot out of Portsmouth Harbour for the open sea on August 3, 1940. The town and port were huddled in wartime blackout, and in the hot, sultry night anti-aircraft gun crews stood at the ready. There was no traffic in the Solent. The sea was calm, and overhead the stars burned like a million candles. Anything might happen on a night like this, thought watchers on the coast: an invasion; a raid by German warships; or the menacing dull throb of hundreds of aircraft in the sky. They idly watched the little craft throwing up a great bow wave.

The crew of the small boat, which with its high bows looked like a porpoise emerging from the water, joked with two men in civilian clothes who peered anxiously ahead of them. As they neared the French coast, the boat's engines were throttled down and it slid almost silently through the water. Soon the whiter line of cliffs could be seen. A little less than two miles from shore the crew slid a rubber dinghy over the side. The two civilians climbed into it. A naval lieutenant leaned over and waved.

"*Au revoir*, and good luck. Rendezvous here Tuesday, 4 a.m."

"*Au revoir, m'sieu.*"

The civilians began to paddle ashore. They were Lieutenants Duclos and Beresnikoff, de Gaulle's first secret agents to enter France. Britain's own espionage organization, with Colonel Buckmaster at its head and Odette Sansom as the woman agent who was to become its most famous heroine, was already formed, and now the French themselves, under the direction of the legendary "Colonel Passy," were to carry out a secret "invasion" of their own country. This is their story.

The motor boat turned and sped out to sea with a roar. The noise awakened German watchers on the coast, and warning bugles sounded. In their tiny rubber dinghy, paddling towards shore, Duclos and Beresnikoff heard a German speedboat starting up somewhere down the coast, and the throb of its engine as it drew near. It passed within fifty yards of them, the wash from its bows rocking them violently, but the coastal mist saved them. Rapidly and silently they paddled their dinghy in near the small harbour of Arromanches and beached it at the foot of the cliffs. Their tiny rubber craft was, in a sense, the first of the armada which was to land on those beaches four years later.

Once ashore, they set about sinking the dinghy, which the dawn would otherwise have revealed. For the rendezvous three days later the naval speedboat had arranged to come closer in and send its own dinghy ashore. Then, carrying a box of pigeons, the pair began to scale the low cliffs adjacent to the harbour. It was just an hour before dawn. The grey mist covering the coast happily hid them from view.

### Almost Bumped Into A Sentry

Climbing carefully, and listening after each step, Duclos and Beresnikoff had almost reached the clifftop when they heard a sentry cough in the pre-dawn chill. He was directly above them. Hastily hiding their pigeons in a crevice and hoping to collect them later, they detoured and reached the top at another point. They slipped between two other sentries and finally, exhausted by their efforts, reached Duclos's family home.

Lieutenant Duclos, who had lived there since his childhood, knew every inch of the Normandy coast. His assignment was to find out what preparations the Germans were making for an invasion of England. He was to reconnoitre the coast, and give what information he collected to his colleague Beresnikoff, who was in turn to be picked up three days later by the speedboat. Duclos had a second mission, which was even more dangerous. He was to make his way to Paris and contact friends who would act as agents, supplying him with information at regular intervals. He was to send this information, under cover of ordinary commercial correspondence, to an address in Lisbon. From there it would be forwarded to Gibraltar and then by air to London. He was to use invisible ink between the lines of the ordinary phrases.

Back in London, meanwhile, their chief, Commandant André Dewavrin, an alert young man of twenty-eight, wondered how they were faring. Dewavrin was a regular officer of the French Army. He had wanted to go on the mission himself, but de Gaulle had quashed that.

There was no arguing with de Gaulle. Dewavrin was disappointed, for he knew the mission was dangerous and he thought that the chief should set an example. There would be many missions and there might not always be volunteers. A tenderfoot in the secret service, he was nevertheless aware of the vast difference between his new work and the duties of a fighting soldier.

Dewavrin had arrived in London with the remnants of his regiment when the Germans were overrunning France. In London he made his way to St. Stephen's House, a rather drab-looking building which looks out over Westminster Bridge. On one of the upper floors General de Gaulle was installed in his first London headquarters. Neither the offices nor the entrance were very imposing. Young Dewavrin asked to see the general. There were quite a few others waiting and he had to

De Gaulle pays a visit to his secret agents.

*JEROME WILLIS collected the facts for this series during four years' liaison with the Free French wartime H.Q. in London. He knew several of the special agents intimately but could not write of them then. He went to France with the liberating armies in 1944 and encountered again old friends who had managed to survive and who were now wearing uniform instead of the anonymous civilian clothes of the special agent. This summer he made a special journey to France for* JOHN BULL *to piece together the tangled story of their wartime adventures.*

Extreme left is Pierre Brossolette, who later killed himself after being caught and tortured

join the queue. When it came, the interview was startlingly abrupt.

The general fixed his cold eyes on him.

"Name?"

"André Dewavrin, *mon Général.*"

"Rank?"

"Commandant, *mon Général.*"

"Regular or temporary?"

"Regular, *mon Général.*"

"Where did you graduate?"

"Polytechnique, *mon Général.*"

"Good, you may start my *Deuxième Bureau*. They will provide you with an office."

### Problem Was Where To Begin

The interview was over. Dewavrin found himself out in the corridor being conducted by an orderly into a small room, furnished only with a single chair and a plain deal table with a telephone on it. There he had to start a *Deuxième Bureau*, or French military intelligence section. He sat down on the chair, looked out at the little tugs puffing up and down the Thames, and wondered where to begin. Outside in the flagged corridor he heard the footsteps of other volunteers. Who are they? Dewavrin thought. How do we check them up?

Like the rest of his countrymen who were cut off from their homeland, he had little money and at the time no additional funds seemed to be forthcoming. Yet he was told to build a military intelligence organization which could send agents to France to gather information about German troop movements and fortifications. How were they to get there and then send their data back across the Channel?

He found his first two recruits, friends who had served with him in Norway. They were Lieutenants Duclos and Beresnikoff. This little trio of French officers had no mess where they could get together and, even worse, they had no place to sleep. Between them they could muster a little less than £100 on which to start a secret service organization.

They soon found lodgings at 69 Cromwell Road, Kensington—bed and breakfast for £2 weekly. In the quiet conventional atmosphere of the Royal Borough, they excited curiosity and interest because of their French uniforms. In those sultry days of July, 1940, when London made feverish improvisations for an invasion that never came, foreigners were regarded with suspicion. The three Frenchmen, in turn, grew suspicious of us.

Every morning a typical old London taxi stood outside 69 Cromwell Road. It stood on the rank alone. Possibly because there was not enough custom there, other taxis rarely joined it. When in a hurry, the "three musketeers" would dash for this taxi and ask to be taken to Westminster. Soon the driver learned they had very little money and that they were volunteers for de Gaulle. He refused to accept the fare.

Amazed at this attitude, the three began to discuss it. To them it seemed highly suspicious. Paris taxi drivers never offered to take anyone free anywhere, no matter what was happening. They began to wonder if the taxi driver could be a British intelligence spy. When the taxi driver finally disappeared—possibly to find a more lucrative rank—they were sure their suspicions had been justified.

Dewavrin and his little group, enlarged now to include Henri Honoré d'Estienne d'Orves, a young French naval officer, began to build up their organization. None of them had any idea of how to go about it. They did, however, know that agents would somehow have to cross the Channel, seek information, and come back with it or find some means of transmitting it.

Early discussions of how this could be done were carried out in the crowded atmosphere of various popular restaurants, with bands blaring in their ears. Huddled over a little table, and eating a three shilling meal, they discussed invisible inks, places where they were sure to find friends, and the difficulty of taking a fishing boat over to a coast bristling with guns.

The first thing they decided was that they would have to change their names. This was essential in case information leaked back to the Germans or in case they were captured on a mission, for their families in France would certainly be made to suffer. They decided on a seemingly naïve subterfuge.

Each picked a name corresponding to that of an underground railway station in Paris. Thus, Dewavrin became Passy; Duclos was St. Jacques, and so on. When these names did eventually reach the Gestapo headquarters in Paris, they were baffled. It was as if British secret agents had adopted such names as Lieutenant Piccadilly, Mr. Oxford Circus or Captain Charing Cross.

### Striped Trousers And Bowlers

Next, they decided to get out of uniform as soon as possible. They made a rough calculation of what money they had between them, and finally elected to patronize Moss Bros. They emerged dressed in bowler hats, black coats and striped trousers. They did not realize that they were so correctly dressed that they attracted more attention than they might have done in French uniforms.

Eventually, Commandant Dewavrin—Colonel Passy now—managed to move from the confusion of Carlton Gardens, de Gaulle's new headquarters, into 3 St. James's Square. Their neighbours had not the least idea that what looked like an ordinary commercial block of offices, with young men in bowler hats coming and going, was actually the beginning of a vast espionage organization.

While the British Government wanted only military information about German activity in France, de Gaulle wanted the agents to do much more than that. He wanted them to build networks all over France which would ultimately be welded into a single organization, ready for use the moment the Allies landed. After much bargaining, an agreement was reached between de Gaulle and Churchill that Britain should furnish funds to help build Colonel Passy's organization. Free France was to make repayment by regularly supplying military information from the other side of the Channel. But the agents would always have a twofold purpose: first, the supply of military information; next, the building of permanent networks in France.

### Opportunity That Was Missed

Meanwhile, nothing had been heard from the first two agents, Duclos and Beresnikoff. Soon they were given up for lost. It was a serious blow to Passy. He had only a handful of men capable of carrying out such difficult and perilous tasks. In addition, a complication had arisen which made agents' work even more difficult. Britain still retained secret relations with Vichy. This was naturally responsible for disagreement between de Gaulle and Churchill. When this disagreement was at its height, a secret operation which might have been one of the earliest and most successful coups against the *Luftwaffe* in Normandy ended in fiasco.

One morning, information filtered into Colonel Passy's office in St. James's Square that the German air force in Normandy was short of air crews—so short that the same air crews had to make three or four bombing trips over London the same night. The crews, Colonel Passy now knew, landed at Meuchon after each raid, had a short rest and then climbed into other aircraft which were fuelled and bombed up ready for the take-off. Their living quarters were, however, two or three miles away from the aerodrome. Every night at the same hour they went along the same road in lorries.

Passy hit upon the idea of a daring operation. His plan was to send five or six agents and

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Two Fathers make guests feel at home. Nobody has ever been turned away from Melleray

Matins in the monastic church. Irishmen are proud of it

Visitors are not asked to work, but they often help

# Welcome from the abbey guestmaster

*by DENNIS HOLMAN*

**Once, men stayed at Mount Melleray Abbey because they drank too much. Times have changed—but the hospitality remains**

IT IS TEN MINUTES TO SIX. At six the church bell will summon the monks of Mount Melleray Abbey to vespers, and Father Virgilius is pulling on a white hooded cowl over his black and white habit. It is his second best cowl. His best hangs from a peg on the wall: it is for receiving special visitors, because Father Virgilius is the guestmaster, a successor of a line of memorable guestmasters, whose hospitality is a by-word, but whose fame in Ireland rests on a remarkable record—their success at weaning alcoholics off the bottle.

Father Virgilius throws back the white, pointed hood, revealing a large, baldish head with the remaining hair at the sides tonsured. He is forty, on the plump side, though the loose, enveloping folds of his garment have the effect of increasing his bulk and raising his stature. He polishes his spectacles, claps them on to his jovial, clean-shaven face and hurries out of the room, down the stairs. In the hall he meets a bearded, brown-habited lay brother. They do not speak, but the brother points to a guest standing with his hat in one hand and a suitcase in the other.

"I should have written or telephoned," the guest apologizes. "I hope I am not putting you out."

"Indeed you're not. You are most welcome," Father Virgilius assures him, grabbing his suitcase and leading the way up the stairs. "Let me show you to your room." The bedroom overlooks the walled-in private garden with a summer-house on the far side. The room is simply and comfortably furnished—a spring bed with spotless linen, a wardrobe, table, chairs, bookcase, a carpet on the floor, a prie-dieu against the wall under a crucifix, religious pictures.

The church bell has begun tolling. "Be sure

Father Virgilius greets three guests. "Race or creed does not matter," he says

to let me know if there's anything you require. The evening meal will be ready in a few minutes," the monk adds before going out. The door shuts behind him and organ music comes up, muted in its escape from the monastic church into which the white-cowled monks are filing, genuflecting, taking their places in the carved oaken choir and adding their voices to the chant.

A group of men crosses the garden from the summer-house and clatters up the stone steps to the front door of the guest-house. For the monks it is vespers; for the guests it is time for tea.

Mount Melleray's reputation for hospitality dates from the famine years in Ireland a century ago, when hundreds of starving people from the surrounding villages were given food at the abbey every day; there is a legend which tells of how the monks' reserve store of meal and potatoes was miraculously multiplied after their crops, too, had suffered from pests that had blighted the country. True or not, faith is not required to believe the other legend: that nobody seeking food or shelter has ever been turned away from Mount Melleray; and wayfarers have rung the monastery doorbell at all hours, drunk and sober.

### Meals Are Eaten In Silence

Visitors who wish to stay at the guest-house are expected to abide by the rules, though these are not rigid, and breaches are generally overlooked. A guest is expected to put his light out by ten o'clock—the abbey functions on "Old Time" (G.M.T.). He is awakened at six next morning by a lay brother tugging at his sleeve and announcing: "Holy Mass will be offered at seven." Should he sleep on, the brother will tug at his sleeve an hour later, to enable him to attend the eight o'clock mass, but will leave him in peace after that if the sleeve-tugging proves unsuccessful. Meals are taken in silence, while an old monk reads from a devotional book, until another monk, presiding at table, tinkles a bell for the reading to stop and a few minutes' conversation before grace at the end of the meal.

There is a special lecture for guests after breakfast, but the rest of the day is theirs—to read, relax, think, pray, talk, and eat the plain, wholesome meals (meat is served, except on Fridays, as guests are dispensed from the abbey's rule of perpetual abstinence). As a stay is undertaken usually as a spiritual retreat, guests are not expected to want to leave the monastery. The usual stay is for a week, but this period may be extended to a fortnight with the abbot's permission, unless the place is full up and other visitors are waiting to move in. There is accommodation at the guest-house for thirty, and in the summer an overflow up to fifty or sixty can be bedded in the school dormitories. Women guests are received at a separate guest-house run by nuns outside the abbey gates.

Father Virgilius's guests are a varied bag. One evening last summer the crowd that sat down to tea included an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Dane, a Swede, an Australian and two Americans, not to mention the Irish; and a few weeks later there was one who declared himself to be a Communist and atheist. "We make no distinction between races and creeds," Father Virgilius says. "We are all God's creatures."

Some guests like to enter into the spirit of monastic life. There were the three Protestant clergymen on a cycling tour. "Are you gentlemen religious?" Father Virgilius asked. "We are," they replied.

"We got on famously," Father Virgilius says. "They attended matins and lauds, Holy Mass later that morning, the lecture at ten thirty and vespers that evening. They went round the monastery and asked a lot of questions. I think they enjoyed their visit." He attributes Mount Melleray's success with a high percentage of drunks that have been cured to the "atmosphere," adding: "Doctors often write asking what our cure it. But we have no cure as such. We just try to help men to the grace of God."

Alcoholics are the guestmaster's responsibility, except for the occasional bad case which is handed over to the infirmarian; though the infirmarian and the guestmaster represent two distinct schools of thought on the subject of handling these particular guests. The infirmarian believes that, as drink is the trouble, it should be cut off altogether; on the other hand, Father Virgilius, in common with the guestmasters before him, has the gentler method of weaning a man off the bottle with diminishing quantities, until the man can do without it altogether.

### Cure For Three-bottle Man

"But the real work is done through the man's confessor," Father Virgilius says. "Together they talk it over sensibly, the confessor prescribing certain prayers and meditations. The man visits the sacraments, and we offer up our prayers for him, too."

Melleray's reputation was built on the success of this method. Relapsed cases after treatment in hospitals and nursing homes have been brought to Melleray unconscious, to leave on two feet and become lifelong teetotallers. "One of our present guests came here thirteen years ago, a three-bottle-a-day man," the guestmaster goes on. "After one day at the abbey he took the pledge and has never touched a drop since. He still returns for his summer retreats." The pledge is a promise to stop drinking made to God in the presence of a confessor. "I promise thee, Almighty God, that from this day forth. . . ." the promise begins. It is not binding and no sin attaches to the breaking of it; but a promise is a promise, and men have usually succeeded in keeping it.

The treatment implies a surrender of liberty: a guest cannot leave the guest-house and garden because only Father Virgilius and Father Luke, who entertains day visitors, have keys to the wall door; but nobody would be held against his will, particularly if he were brought in and left there by relatives. Penitent alcoholics voluntarily incarcerate themselves, though the odd one may slip out with a party being shown round the monastery, and return, stricken with remorse, after the pubs are shut. "We don't always succeed," Father Virgilius admits, "but hope when a man leaves that his stay has done him some good."

### Guests Who Stay For Life

If a departing guest makes so crude a gesture as to ask: "What do I owe you?" Father Virgilius will probably reply: "There are no such things as debts in Mount Melleray. You owe me nothing." The guest may make an offering. "But whether he leaves a hundred pounds or nothing at all will make no difference to the welcome he will receive if he comes again," he adds. One man visited the abbey every year for more than twenty years and stayed a fortnight each time without so much as leaving a penny. But he remembered the abbey in his will; Mount Melleray got everything he possessed.

The occasional guest stays for life. There was Paddy, a famous Dublin barman, who went to Mount Melleray for a visit; a couple of weeks later the hotel where he worked received his resignation. Later, as Brother Patrick, he was put to work at the guest-house and often had the opportunity of caring for some of the customers he had served only a few years before.

In Brother Patrick's place today is a man who entered the community last January, having given up a job in the Civil Service at £1,500 a year. The present infirmarian, a doctor, practised in Dublin until a few years ago. One summer he visited Melleray and left with a

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Jack Spraget watches as his son Walter, tuning fork in hand, tests Berlin's "Freedom Bell"

# Hush-hush tuner of the bells

*by STANFORD O'BRIEN*

**The doors are closed when Jack Spraget shaves the last thousandth from the great bells. His skill is secret**

VISITORS POURED BY THE HUNDRED, one evening last August, through the open doors of a Croydon factory. They had come to hear the deep tolling of a bell. The bell was new; it weighed ten tons; and it had been ordered by a group of Americans who, naming it "The Freedom Bell," planned to hang it in the city hall of Berlin. All this gave an international flavour to the occasion.

A slight, elderly man, Jack Spraget by name, had come to hear the bell, too—but not for the first time. One of the skilled tuners of the large firm of Gillett and Johnston, makers of clocks, carillons and bells, Spraget felt pretty happy about *that* bell. "We got it finished on time," he said. If it had not been for a century-long tradition of men with ears as delicate as his, the firm might not have got the order at all. One of Britain's three bell foundries, Gillett and Johnston (like the other two) has an international reputation for quality—especially with regard to accurate tuning.

"With 'The Freedom Bell,'" Spraget says, "it was a race against time. We received the order in mid-June—the finished bell had to be shipped on August 25." The first month was spent in moulding the inner and outer shells between which the huge bell was to be cast, a delicate task done by hand and judged by eye. Then the bell was cast. For ten anxious days, the workmen waited while the metal cooled: after that, the tuners went to work.

"We kept the lathe running day and night," Spraget recalls. "In one week I worked one hundred and twenty-one hours." More than 3,000 pounds of metal were peeled off before his team was satisfied that the big bell was in tune; but, three days before the deadline, it was ready.

Results like that are obtained because, in 1891, a Sussex clergyman developed the system of tuning which Jack Spraget uses today. "It's called Simpson's system," he says. "Using it, you have to tune five overtones, not only to the right pitch, but to the right balance with each other. Why, a lot of trained musicians can't even *hear* all five notes!" For tuning, Spraget uses vertical lathes capable of taking a thirty-ton bell. These lathes are a vast improvement on the chisels once used for the job. "But you still have to be careful," he says. "Metal can be removed at only a few thousandths of an inch each time. Between cuts the note is checked against a tuning fork. The last fraction of an inch may be too much."

Although he has been cutting bells since 1919, it was not until three years ago that Jack Spraget really tuned one. Up till then the secrets of tuning had been kept closely among specialists, but in 1947, Michael Howard, the firm's master tuner and managing director, taught Jack and Jack's son Walter. "Already," says Jack, "Walter can teach me a thing or two. Everyone who has been a tuner here seems to have added a bit of skill of his own." This accumulated knowledge is consided to be so precious and so secret that, during the final stage of tuning, no outsider is admitted to the workshop.

Spraget's work, however, is not confined to the tuning of new bells. "That one," he says, pointing to a green patinated antique, "was cast for Burford Church about six hundred years ago. Bells are the longest-lived musical instruments of all. Old ones have a tone of their own. They had thinner walls, and the bronze contained more tin; and, like wine, bells mellow with age."

### Ringers Revived An Old Custom

When an old bell which cannot be retuned has to be melted down, the metal is used in the new one. Even the ancient inscriptions are copied, down to the misspelt words. "Bells have personalities of their own," Spraget asserts. "In the old days they were not only christened, but given god-parents."

In the past, bells have been used for purposes as varied as scaring away storms and celebrating a record bag of ducks by the Mayor of Bristol. Many local customs are associated with them. Recently, a Buckinghamshire vicar who preached that these traditions be revived was surprised when some parishioners took him at his word.

He was awakened one night by the firing of shotguns under his window. When he leaned out and asked what the fuss was about, he was greeted thus: "We're the bellringers and we're keeping up the old customs. Remember that one about letting off our guns over the church to celebrate Guy Fawkes Day?" The vicar said he did, but added with asperity: "Now finish the job so I can get some sleep."

"You don't seem to understand," the ringers said. "We're not making this row for fun. The tradition is that when we've finished, Vicar has to give us a gallon of beer." The vicar paid up.

Few parish churches could pay the £2,000 which an octave costs today. Most have acquired their rings over the centuries. Not many are reduced to the state of a certain Yorkshire chapel which could not afford a single calling bell. There, the sexton climbed the tower and waited until he saw the priest approaching. Then he cupped his hands and called: "He's a-comin'! He's a-comin'!"

St. Martin's, Birmingham, was more fortunate, having been left a plot of land 300 years ago by a traveller who had been guided through the night by the sound of bells ringing. His design was that rent from the land would provide new bell ropes for ever. As Birmingham grew, however, the land increased in value. By 1929 its accumulated rent paid for the recasting of the peal.

### £20,000 Carillons For Export

Jack Spraget feels that tradition is strongest in those bells which are sounded by swinging them full circle on a wheel, from which hangs a rope pulled by one of the 50,000 enthusiasts in Britain. But for producing tunes, he says, one needs a carrillon of fixed bells struck by hammers. These instruments may cost over £20,000, and there are only seven in Britain. But Jack is kept busy on new export jobs, such as a fifty-bell carillon being made for a military academy in Indiana, and another which will go to Canberra.

At one time, Spraget says, there was a certain feeling of antagonism between ringers and carilloneurs. "I don't take sides," he adds. "Although anyone here can try their hand on our practice instruments after work, the truth is that I've never even touched a bell rope." THE END

Cradled in Padella's arms, the old man was barely conscious. There was something that he wanted to say, but he couldn't get the words out

# THE ANGRY MOUNTAIN

*by* ***ALAN JENKINS***

ILLUSTRATED BY KOOLMAN

**The experts said it couldn't happen. But now the lava swept down, burning everything. And this was Paquita's wedding day**

BETWEEN THE FRUIT HARVEST and the wine harvest there were five weeks of holiday at Montilla. It was the time for fiestas, dancing by night in the village square, and going down the mountain side to Segarra for the bullfights. It was the time for circuses, which came only twice a year, and for open-air cinema shows, which took place every week in the Plaza de la Constitucion.

Above all, it was the time to get married. Paquita's wedding day fell one week after Christmas. It was unimaginably hot, for Montilla is at the northernmost tip of Chile. Towards noon an unnatural stillness gripped the air. Standing at the church door of La Magdalena, Father Ignacio gasped for breath. He was old and suffered from indigestion.

"Patience, my son," he murmured to the young bridegroom who stood beside him. "She will come, never fear."

"It is not for my bride that I am anxious, Father."

Father Ignacio glanced upwards, beyond the church's slender Spanish belfry to the volcano's immense misty shape.

"The Old Lady is smoking," he joked. "Let us hope it is the pipe of peace!"

Ramón looked up at the crater. "The scientists say she is almost extinct——"

But now the bride and her family appeared, climbing the jagged path to the church. The women wore their Sunday mantillas, the men their floppy black hats. Paquita leaned on the arm of her father, Padella. Ramón felt an upsurge of relief and excitement. Paquita was eighteen, of a wild beauty; in her Spanish blood was a streak of Indian, and she was the mayor's daughter.

After much kissing and hugging, they all entered the church. It was then that the first rumble was heard, like a squadron of tanks passing over an iron bridge. Father Ignacio glanced again at the Old Lady before closing the church door, but all he could see was a motionless white plume of smoke above the crater. He murmured reassuringly: "Keep calm, my children. There is nothing to fear. The scientists say. . . ."

Inside the church it was cool. Before the altar Father Ignacio began to speak. "Repeat these words after me: I, Ramón Ortega Perez, take thee, Paquita Augustine Padella. . . ."

There was a fresh rumbling; this time it seemed that the whole church swayed a little. Ramón licked his lips: "I, Ramón Ortega Perez. . . ."

A shower of stones rattled against the windows on the north side of the church. A second later, a fearful explosion shook the earth. For the first time a yellow glint of flame at the Old Lady's summit shone weirdly through the stained glass. Beyond the nave a large piece of fretted ceiling crumbled slowly and fell in fragments.

Mayor Padella's voice rang out: "It is not safe to stay here, Father."

Father Ignacio paused. He said: "The *Alcalde* is right, we must postpone the wedding."

Padella broke through the cries of anger and disappointment: "You are all under my orders. Everybody is to change into working clothes and come to the Hotel del Fuega in twenty minutes' time. We will then see what is to be done."

The wedding party streamed out of the little church into the blinding sunlight, and hurried down the path. Already there were great cracks in the earth.

There was only one telephone in Montilla, and that was at Mayor Padella's house. Padella rang up his colleague the Mayor of Segarra, who confirmed that help was ready whenever it was needed. He then changed into overalls, and ran through the cinder-strewn street to the Hotel del Fuego, where most of the village had congregated. In the big room, among the tables which had been laid for the wedding breakfast, he shouted for silence.

"*Montillanos!*" he began. "These are strange things to say to you on my daughter's wedding day. But they must be said. If the Old Lady behaves as she did thirty-three years ago—and many of you are too young to remember that—our vines will be destroyed. And if that happens, we shall have to leave Montilla."

THERE were cries of mingled dismay and disbelief. Padella went on: "Yes, my friends. We shall have to move to another part of the mountain. Build a new village. Plant new vines. We may leave Montilla, but we can never leave the Old Lady. *Montillanos*, you know that the Old Lady is our friend as well as our enemy. Why else did the Indians, who lived here four centuries ago, worship her? Yes, they called her the Angry Mountain. But they were wrong! She is not always angry. She can feed and she can starve. She can give and take away. She can reward and punish. She can——"

The mayor broke off as the rumbling came again. Father Ignacio took advantage of the pause to observe mildly: "These powers belong to God, not to mountains." Padella patted him affectionately on the shoulder: they were good friends, although Padella never went to church.

"No, we can never leave the Old Lady," the mayor repeated. "Why? Because the liquid fire she pours upon us in her rage is the very stuff that makes our soil so rich. Without that soil

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Kerans's victory smile. When the ordeal was over, men were crying—and were not ashamed

ran headlong into the semi-sunken hulks, only one thing was sure: she would slice off her bottom; she would peel it off like the skin of a banana; she would let in the murky water of the Yangtse. And she would be finished.

Kiang Yin was just ahead.

Kerans strained on the bridge, listening for the first shell, throwing his eyes at the blank wall of darkness ahead. *Where is the damned boom?*

A flare shot with still, spine-chilling suddenness into the night. It echoed, silver-bright and falsely gay, in the broken surface of the water. As it did, artillery thundered and the river burst into a cauldron of climbing waterspouts. "Give me black smoke!" Kerans yelled down the voice-pipe. "Give me all the smoke you can make!"

### Gamble At The Boom

Then, just ahead, Kerans saw a light. *The boom,* he thought. But there was one light only and his chart had showed that there should be two, with the channel, thus marked, between them. Near the light he could make out the grim silhouette of a patrol vessel. Thin lines of tracer fingered out from it erratically toward *Amethyst*. None of the bullets found home.

They were almost on the light, and Kerans had to make his gamble. Should he pass it to the right or to the left? There was no time to weigh the pros and cons and there were no pros and cons to weigh. Down the voice-pipe, he spoke to Leslie Frank, at the wheel. "Two degrees to port, cox'n," he said, making it sound crisp and decisive, as if he had no doubt at all. Then, silently, he prayed that his guess was correct.

The light was a hundred yards away. Then fifty. . . . Ten. . . . And he was through, clean through, without a scratch or a scrape. The ship was slicing full speed down the flooded Yangtse toward the open sea. But there were still many miles of river to navigate. There were still many guns to pass. Kerans began to shiver a little. For the first time, he noticed that the night had become cool.

At about half past two on the morning of July 31, with *Amethyst* still running at full speed on both engines, Day croaked up the voicepipe to Kerans: "Echo sounder reads only three fathoms of water, sir!" Three fathoms of water left little margin for safety. *Amethyst's* normal draught was about nine feet. Kerans ordered Frank to steer sharply to starboard into deeper water. He had barely got the words out when he saw a patrol vessel just ahead. His heart sank. Was this another control point? Kerans decided that his only move was to get as close to the vessel as possible and smother her fire in *Amethyst's* superstructure. He shouted new orders down to Frank, and the frigate scraped by the patrol vessel with a few inches to spare. There were no casualties, no damage.

At eighteen minutes to three, Kerans sent another message to Hongkong: ONE HUNDRED UP. One hundred miles of the mad dash was now behind them. There were still forty miles to go, and there were still the giant, long-range coastal guns to pass at the Woosung forts.

At four o'clock Kerans, peering ahead into the night, suddenly saw that *Amethyst* was running straight for a junk, sailing without lights. They were almost upon it and nothing could prevent a crash. The ship sliced the junk neatly



in two. *Amethyst* shook from bow to stern.

Frank had been taking benzedrine tablets regularly. He was the coxswain now, and there was no one to relieve him at the wheel. He had a bucket beside him in case it should be needed. Now and then he was brought a cup of tea and a sandwich. He could see nothing from the wheelhouse, but steered steadily as Kerans commanded. Suddenly, the ship trembled with shock. *We're hit!* he thought. Then Kerans's voice flowed coolly out of the voice-pipe: "That is a junk, that was." Frank exhaled heavily.

### Through The Enemy Searchlights

Meanwhile, H.M.S. *Concord* moved into the wide mouth of the Yangtse to cover *Amethyst* if she came under the fire of the Woosung guns.

COME QUICK, Kerans signalled to her.

He could see searchlights sweeping the water far ahead, probing the thinning night. The sky above was still black, but far to the east he could see a lighter strip of heaven. He still hoped to get out of the river before dawn. The river was getting wider all the time. As the ship neared the forts, Kerans moved her as far out from shore as he felt was safe. "Train B-gun on the forts," he ordered, "just in case." The men on the upper deck put on their tin hats and waited. Then as they came opposite the forts, a searchlight probed past the ship. It stopped. It swept slowly, carefully back. Kerans watched it, fascinated. The searchlight passed on.

The pastel shoots of dawn were spreading across the sky and *Amethyst* was as far out into the river as navigating hazards allowed. The Communists could not after all have spotted them. The big guns did not fire.

Kerans's voice burst over the intercom. "I want every man to give everything he has for the last leg," he said. His voice sounded almost cheerful. Down in the dim light of the engine-room, Williams grinned. He was very tired. Perspiration was running down his face and his body. "We'll make it now," he said to no one in particular. "We damn well will."

Leading Stoker Ormrod climbed up the ladder to the upper deck to see where they were. He came clattering down again. "There's a destroyer in sight," he shouted. "I think it's one of ours!" His voice was cracked with excitement. A couple of minutes later someone yelled exuberantly down the hatch: "*Concord* in sight!" Williams did not try to hide the quaver in his voice. "All right," he said. "We'll go up, one at a time, and have a look. Winfield, you take it first."

### *Amethyst* Rejoins The Fleet

The cool air hit Winfield like a wall of water. He stepped out on to the quarterdeck and looked around. *Concord* was close to them now. He could see the excited faces of her crew. A great cheer swelled across the water. Then *Concord* turned, her bow pushing into the wide, safe mouth of the river toward the open sea.

Winfield saw that, around him, some of *Amethyst's* men were crying, quite openly and without shame. Then he put a hand up to his face and discovered that his own cheeks were wet. He didn't care. He didn't care at all.

In the chartroom, McNamara grinned at Bryson. "Isn't it wonderful?" he said. Bryson's lips moved but nothing came out. He had talked himself quite hoarse over the voice-pipe, constantly shouting the depths up to Kerans. But the look on his face, the sheer relieved joy on it, spoke much louder than any words.

Frank, in the wheelhouse, thought: *I've been in the Navy for twenty-four years, but I've never felt like this before.*

Now Kerans sent his last message to the C.-in-C.: HAVE REJOINED THE FLEET. AM SOUTH OF WOOSUNG (he dictated to French). NO DAMAGE OR CASUALTIES. GOD SAVE THE KING.

They were out. THE END

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*Lawrence Earl's book, "Yangtse Incident, the story of H.M.S. Amethyst," is published by Harrap (price 10s. 6d.)*

Holding the star's picture, Gerry Dereham takes on Eileen Harvey. Merle Oberon started that way

of five feet eleven with greying hair to take the part of a banker, his mind goes immediately to the right person.

From five o'clock each afternoon the extras ring in to see if there is any work for the next day. Each name is called out by one of the two telephonists at the eighteen-line switchboard. If one of the directors has a job he holds up his hand and the call is transferred to one of the three telephones on his desk. Otherwise there are muttered "no, dears" from the directors, and the telephonist replies, "Sorry, nothing at the moment." At the same time the film studios are ringing up and giving their requirements for the next day.

### Some Demands Are Impossible

Occasionally, Dereham has found it impossible to fulfil demands. For instance, one studio wanted twenty Guardsmen six feet tall, but only thirty-five inches round the chest. "That was ridiculous. It was probably because they had a stock of uniforms originally made for chorus boys, who are exceptionally slim. In the end they had to accept thirty-sevens and thirty-eights." When registered extras are unsuitable, or too few, help is called in from outside. When 500 jitterbug enthusiasts were required for *Dance Hall*, an extra found them in London ballrooms. "They certainly looked the real thing." Similarly, the Borstal boys for *Boys in Brown* were recruited in East End boys' clubs. But when an Albert Hall audience was wanted for *Prelude to Fame*, Dereham merely sent out a general call to all the extras on his books.

In age, the extras vary from boys and girls of sixteen to the former Jermyn Street tailor who, at ninety-six, remembers Gladstone. They are of all heights, from four feet four to six feet five. "The type of man wanted most often is the 'uniform' type—five feet ten to six feet one and between twenty and forty. Taller than that they stand out in a crowd. If they're any shorter, directors think they're not getting their money's worth. There's a shortage of really smart, well-dressed people, especially glamour girls. Unless they live with their parents these girls just can't afford the necessary clothes."

Few extras can hope to live on their earnings. Only two of Dereham's earned as much as £600 last year. The standard rate of pay is two guineas a day, with double rates on Sundays, fourteen shillings extra for night work and half pay when they are called but later dismissed. Stand-ins get slightly more and doubles twice as much. Stuntmen are paid by contract. For speaking "words in his native tongue, not exceeding ten," the extra draws a bonus of ten shillings. If he speaks over twenty he jumps to a daily minimum of five guineas. If he wears his own evening or morning dress or beach costume ("provided the body and legs are made-up") he earns a further pound. He also gets ten shillings for cutting his hair or moustache. Twenty pirates with hairy chests needed for *Treasure Island* were paid a five-guinea-a-week retainer while growing beards to match their bosoms.

Three years ago Film Casting frequently answered 2,000 calls each week. Nowadays the average is nearer 400. Although Dereham believes that more will be needed next year, supply will still exceed demand. "Even though we try to apportion work equally, there's one man, an excellent type, who hasn't had a day's work for five weeks."

Dereham has definite ideas on the type of person attracted to crowd work. "Some of them are lazy, others are film-struck. Though Guy Rolfe, Merle Oberon and Maxwell Reed were extras, and Stewart Granger and Michael Rennie stand-ins, the chances of getting on are small. The more ambitious ones get a livelihood in other ways and come here to supplement their income." One man runs a weekly dance and loans out a van. Another has three mobile canteens. This Christmas some played Father Christmas at department stores or worked at the Post Office. Others have small private incomes or pensions. There are five retired colonels, for instance, and married women who work for pin money.

### Old-time Stars Who Live On Hope

"One man gave up a twelve-pound-a-week job to become an extra," recalls Dereham. "He was crackers. The most unfortunate of all are people who've been in the theatre all their lives. When they've finished acting they're too old to learn another job. Some of them were well known on the halls and two were silent stars. Now they're living on hope. I feel particularly sorry for them because I'm an old pro myself."

Gerry Dereham first went on the stage in 1904 at the age of thirteen in a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* with Henry Irving. After this he continued at school until he was nineteen, when he played chorus and understudy in *The Chocolate Soldier*. Two years later he had his first film part, and a year after that took juvenile lead in *In the Days of Robin Hood*. He next joined a George Edwardes company at Daly's and toured for sixteen years, singing juvenile parts. He had small parts in *Bits and Pieces* with George Robey, and later understudied Harry Welchman in *The Desert Song*.

In 1934 he returned to the screen—as an extra. "I'd been making good money but I'd been improvident." Unlike most other extras he leaped the gulf between acting and administration by becoming a production assistant with London Films. After a series of casting jobs he was selected by the British Film Producers' Association to organize Film Casting, and a year later, in 1947, became its chief casting director.

### Extras Like The New Set-up

All members registered with Film Casting must be members of the Film Artistes' Association, which appoints selection committees from time to time to select recruits. In the present slump, only young people are eligible. Once he has a union card, complete with photograph to prevent substitution, the hopeful pays half-a-crown to be registered with Film Casting. This fee, renewable every three months, is the sole charge. Only when an extra earns over five guineas a day is a ten per cent commission taken. Most people agree that this is an immense improvement on the times when extras were engaged through private agencies, some of doubtful integrity.

Curious to know how many extras he could identify on the screen, Dereham went some years ago to see *This England*, in which the same company had been used all the way through to depict scenes from English history. "I only placed three," he says. "Two were women with small speaking parts. The other was a man notorious for poking his nose into the camera. When a picture's shown, it's very rarely you can recognize the extras. But while it's being made, they're the most important thing in the world. You'd think we were casting stars." THE END

*Concluding the serial of Lawrence Earl's stirring best-seller YANGTSE INCIDENT*

# Amethyst runs the gauntlet

**Kerans was tired of bargaining with the Communists. His mind was made up. Tonight *Amethyst* was going to escape —pilotless, down a treacherous and flooded river, under the point-blank range of the Chinese Communist batteries**

Flares tore away the darkness. In the flood of

WHEN, ON THE AFTERNOON of July 30, 1949, Kerans told Lieutenant Strain that *Amethyst* would break out of the Yangtse that very night, Strain could scarcely believe the evidence of his ears.

For one hundred days now the Chinese Communist Army had held *Amethyst* trapped in the river. During that long, sweltering wait Strain had watched the young lieutenant-commander's anxiety for his crew grow as the negotiations with the Communists for *Amethyst's* safe conduct down the river had worsened. This sudden announcement of escape—the first indication Kerans had given to anyone of his intentions—meant that Kerans now considered that any further negotiation with the Communists was futile. And if the breakout was scheduled for that night, Kerans must have been secretly planning to escape for some time.

Lieutenant Strain had been caught up in *Amethyst's* fate by chance. As the flotilla electrical officer, he had been travelling in *Amethyst* as a passenger to Nanking when the Communist artillery suddenly opened fire on *Amethyst* on that fateful April 20, killing and wounding fifty-four of the crew, including the captain, Lieutenant-Commander Skinner, who had died of his wounds. All *Amethyst's* officers except one—young Lieutenant Hett—had been wounded in the action and later evacuated, and Strain had stayed on with *Amethyst*. He was there when Kerans, sent from Nanking to take command of the frigate, had arrived aboard two days after the attack. He knew Kerans well enough now to know that the decision to escape had not been taken lightly.

*Amethyst's* chances of escaping and rejoining the fleet were hazardous. For one thing, the ship had no river pilot—the Chinese pilot who had taken *Amethyst* up the Yangtse on April 20 had deserted the ship soon after the Communist bombardment. The Yangtse was a difficult enough river to navigate *with* a pilot. Without one, it would be extremely dangerous, especially as the river was swollen with floodwater from a recent typhoon. Moreover, the ship's company was down to half strength due to the casualties and the men who had been evacuated for safety shortly after the original attack. Even if these difficulties were overcome, the ship still had to run the gauntlet of Communist guns stationed all along the river down to the sea.

Strain stared expectantly at Kerans as the slim, thirty-three year old lieutenant-commander went on to speak about his proposed escape.

"I'll give you my reasons," Kerans said. The hot sun was beating down upon them as they sat on the deck. There was the sleepy buzzing of flies and the murmur of voices from different parts of the ship. It was very peaceful and the thought of a naval action seemed distant and unreal. Kerans spoke in a whisper. "The fuel still left in the tanks is down to fifty-three tons," he said. "Seventeen tons of that will be lost in suction. See what that means?"

"What?" Strain asked quietly.

"Why, it means that we'll need thirty tons to drive the ship at top speed down the river, and if we don't shove off now, in a few days—even at anchor—we'll swallow up several tons of oil. There goes our margin of safety. There won't be enough left to break out later."

### Moon Just Right For Escape

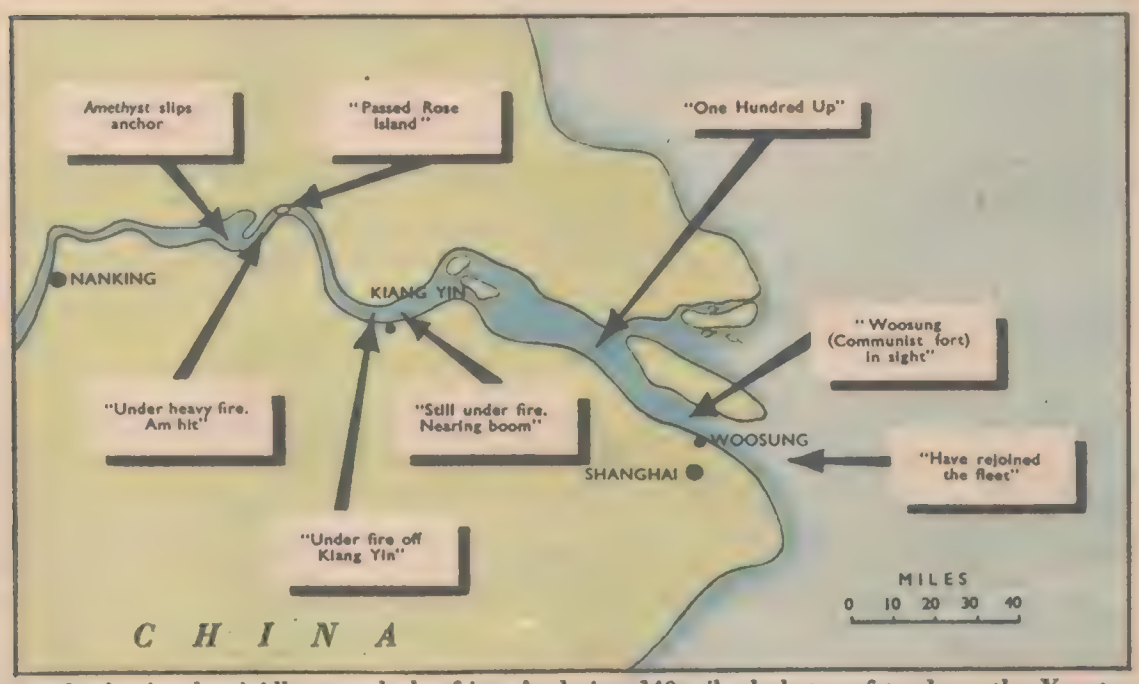
Strain nodded. He drew a will-o'-the-wisp pattern on the deck with his toe. Kerans continued. "Tonight will be the last one for another month with the phase of the moon just right for a breakout," he said. "The moon is due to set at eleven tonight. I've decided to slip away at ten, accepting an hour of the waning moon as an unavoidable handicap. We'll need every minute of time if we hope to get past the guns of Woosung Fortress before dawn." He paused. "The Yangtse is still very high because of the typhoon," he said, "but it's due to fall very soon. And travelling by night without a pilot we'll need all the water we can get to take us over the mud-banks. Besides," he added, "food is getting very short."

"It adds up," Strain said.

"Then," Kerans went on, "there is the element of surprise after all the months of standing still." He paused and looked straight into Strain's eyes. "Those are my reasons for wanting to break out. I've been thinking about them a great deal. Now I want you to give me any reasons why we should not."

Strain began to look pleased. The idea was sinking in. "I can't think of any," he said. His face broke into a slow smile.

Shortly before six o'clock, Kerans said to Lieutenant Hett: "Look, get the charts and prepare them in the right order. We're going to




*Amethyst's* signals vividly record the frigate's daring 140-mile dash to safety down the Yangtse

light Kerans saw a Communist patrol boat close to the merchant ship he had been carefully shadowing. *This is it*, he thought. Then the firing began

break out tonight." The young officer's face lit up, making him look more schoolboyish than ever. He ran off like a rabbit after the charts.

Kerans was feeling pretty good about the breakout. He had studied all the angles, quietly and alone, during the long wait. He knew the ship might not get through, but it was tonight or never. Logic told him there was no choice. He drew up a list of seventeen petty officers and key ratings and ordered them to meet in his cabin at about eight that evening. By now, the only ones besides Lieutenants Strain and Hett who had been told of the impending breakout were Flight Lieutenant Michael Fearnley, the R.A.F. doctor who had been flown to *Amethyst* to help the wounded following the death of the ship's doctor in the bombardment of April 20, and Engineroom Artificer Leonard Williams. Williams, as senior engineroom rating, had been in charge of the engineroom ever since the wounded engineroom officer, Lieutenant Wilkinson, had been evacuated.

The seventeen trooped silently into Kerans's small cabin. There was not much space to spare. The door was shut. "I'm going to break out tonight at ten," Kerans said. Somebody let out a low whistle. There was not much light in the cabin, but enough to reveal a pattern of pale, tense faces. Somebody coughed. "As far as the engineroom personnel are concerned," Kerans went on, "I want everything they can give me. Everything. I'll not give the order for *full ahead* except in a real emergency. If we come under fire, I shall ask for smoke. Understand?" One or two of the men nodded silently. Leading Mechanic Albert Garns, in charge of the quarterdeck—ordinarily a petty officer's job—suddenly felt sick to his stomach.

### *Flash* For Top Priority

"As for those on the guns," Kerans continued, "fire will not be opened until we have been fired on."

Somebody cleared his throat.

"You, French!" Kerans said, looking towards Jack French, *Amethyst's* sole telegraphist.

"W.T. silence will be enforced until I am ready to send a message. Then only flash procedure will be used." This meant that each message would be preceded by the single word *flash*. The signal that followed would then get top priority from every ship and from every other receiver anywhere in the world.

"Now, then," Kerans said, crisply, but not liking to think of this part of it, "if we are hit and sinking, I will beach the ship, if possible, to save lives. The ship's company will get ashore. Then I will blow up *Amethyst*. I will make the last signal myself before destroying the W.T. office. If disaster does come, your aim is to reach Shanghai or escape in junks to the sea."

It was hot. Kerans wiped his brow with a handkerchief. "Pass the information along to the ship's company," he said, "but watch the Chinese. We don't want to give the show away now. Good luck to you all. I hope we make it. At least we'll take a damn good shot at it."

### "What's The Buzz About?"

John McNamara, the N.A.A.F.I. canteen manager, was standing at the rail, thinking of his home in London, and of how much cooler it would be there. He saw veteran Leslie Frank, in charge of the wheelhouse, step out on deck. There was something, a tenseness perhaps, about his face. "What's happening, Frankie?" McNamara asked. "What's the buzz?"

"We're going for a little trip," Frank said. His voice was calm, too calm. McNamara said quietly: "What do you mean, a little trip?"

"Why, Damager, I mean we're going to try to make a run for it."

McNamara's grin was twisted. "Don't be so bloody silly, Frankie."

"We are. The captain intends to make a dash for it tonight."

"*Tonight?*" McNamara refused, at first, to believe it was true. A moment later he saw Williams collecting his stokers quietly together, and he watched them file down the stokehole into the boiler-house. *By God, it's true*, he thought. Somebody tapped his elbow. "Lieutenant Hett wants to see you. He's in the charthouse."

McNamara reported to Hett. Hett said: "McNamara, what do you know about charts?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Well, now's your chance to learn." Hett spread out a set of about a dozen charts which followed one another down the Yangtse as far as Woosung, the fortress near the mouth of the river. Then he showed McNamara the course down the river as it had been marked on the charts by Kerans. "I want you to stay inside the charthouse," Hett told him, "and follow the course all the way down. I have another set of charts on the bridge. If the bridge is hit and destroyed, you will still know the course and the ship can carry on. I'll call out the different landmarks to you over the voicepipe as we come to them. All right?"

"Yes, sir," McNamara said. He could feel a nerve jumping near the base of his jaw. *I'm scared*, he thought. He tried not to remember what it had been like during the first action.

Stoker Kenneth Winfield had been sitting on the quarterdeck, reading a dog-eared copy of *Picturegoer* by the fading light, when Petty Officer Venton clapped him on the shoulder. "Grease the sirens, Ken," Venton said. "We're leaving. Grease them so the brass won't shine."

"You're kidding, Joe!"

"I'm not kidding, Ken." Venton told him about Kerans's decision. Winfield felt a brief, panicky fluttering in his stomach. Then, after a while, when the dusk had deepened a little, he climbed up to the sirens on the funnel ladder and greased them heavily. He felt curiously detached from reality. *All this is happening to someone else*, he thought.

### Magazines Loaded And Ready

The ship was almost set for the getaway. B-gun's magazines were loaded and ready. Black paint had been thrown over the white surfaces of the superstructure. The watertight doors were shut. Great sheets of canvas had been hurriedly stretched along the sides of the frigate to transform her silhouette as much as possible. The machinery was oiled up. A head of steam had already been raised earlier in order to generate power for transmitting wireless signals.

Stores Petty Officer John McCarthy had ordered potatoes and eggs and cabbages and beer from the Chinese traders that morning. He had told them to have the supplies on board by seven in the evening, and they had not come. Still, he was not worried about it. They were often a day late, and by tomorrow who would care? Now he was very busy and had no time to think of the traders. He had supplied Petty

Officer Cook Griffiths with enough bread for sandwiches and with cocoa and tea for the trip down. He was getting first-aid kits ready in case they were needed, when suddenly somebody shouted to him in a frightened voice: "Stores P.O.! Stores P.O.! Your traders are coming out!"

*My God!* McCarthy thought wildly, *not now!* He rushed up on to the deck. The sampan was nearing the ship. Kerans was there. Kerans was everywhere. He spoke calmly and crisply as if there were no danger, as if there was no risk that the traders might report the ship's preparations to the Communists on shore. "You'll have to do without an interpreter," Kerans said. "He might say something to tip them off. Don't let them go past the top of the gangway: and get rid of them as quickly as possible."

Kerans turned to the men gathered on the deck. "Bring camp beds to the quarterdeck," he ordered, "and temporarily stop the preparations. Some of you men undress and turn in on the camp beds. Make it look good."

McCarthy stood at the gangway. "Hallo!" he said, as the traders came alongside. They grinned and passed the potatoes, eggs, cabbages and beer up from the sampan. The Number One trader handed an invoice to McCarthy. He checked it. "Hey!" he said, trying to keep a tremor out of his voice. "You're five hundred cattis of potatoes short." The trader nodded. "I'll pay you tomorrow when you bring the rest," McCarthy said. The trader seemed to understand. "Morning," he said. "Morning."

"That's right," McCarthy smiled. "In the morning." The sampan pushed off. McCarthy let out a long, relieved breath.

### Just What The Doctor Ordered

When darkness came, Kerans, who had spent long nights observing the flow of civilian traffic up and down the Yangtse, ordered Communist river lights rigged. "A green light over a red is the ticket for travelling downstream," he said. He tried to eat a cold meal but was unable to get it down. Then, at nine o'clock, he climbed up on to the bridge to accustom his eyes to the dark. At ten o'clock all was ready.

He waited a few minutes for the moon to disappear behind some friendly clouds. The moon, fortunately, was on the south side of the river. It would not silhouette the ship for the Communist battery which was covering *Amethyst*. He thought he heard a motor pulsing somewhere. He listened intently. Then, all at once, he saw her—a merchant ship rounding Ta-sha Island on its way down river. He thought: *Just what the doctor ordered. Something I can follow!*

He waited until the ship passed *Amethyst's* anchorage. Then he ordered: "Obey telegraphs!" The first movement on the main engines came at nine minutes past ten. Kerans ordered the port engine half ahead.

"Slip cable!" he said.

*Amethyst* was anchored with her bow upstream. Kerans heard the pin being knocked out of the cable join and waited, wondering anxiously if the cable, wrapped as it was in greased cloth, would make a noise and give them away. He heard no splash, no splash at all.

"Starboard engine half astern!" he ordered. The port engine was still at half ahead. Using full wheel and helped by the galloping current, *Amethyst* made a full turn in less than a minute. Just as the turn was completed, Kerans looked up and saw a gushing shower of sparks leave the funnel. He tensed, waiting for the Communist gunfire. None came. Under his breath, Kerans said: "Whew!" He was perspiring freely. Now *Amethyst* was headed in the right direction. The race for freedom had begun.

They waited, down in the engineroom, for the word to start the engines. They waited silently, sweating already, and eager to get it over with. Williams kept thinking of what had happened on the way up river. *If we can get past Rose Island*, he thought—the memory of the attack stuck in his mind—*we'll be all right.*

Word came down from the bridge to start the port engine. The ship was alive again for the first time since April. "It was a fine feeling," Stoker Winfield said later. "It is like being in a graveyard to be in a dead ship."

Winfield was on the voicepipe taking orders direct from the bridge. When the order came down for half ahead on both engines, he knew they had turned completely and were on the way down river. They had not been hit. The men in the engineroom exchanged pleased glances. Williams held his thumbs up and grinned. The first great danger was past. . . . .

### The Communists Open Fire

They had been following close on the heels of the merchant ship for quarter of an hour when a flare tore away the darkness ahead of them. The flare, obviously meant for the ship ahead, had been shot up from the Communist battery at Tachiang. The merchant ship replied to the flare by sounding her siren. In the flood of light, Kerans noticed a small naval patrol vessel not far off his port bow. *This is it*, he thought.

A second silvery flare shot up, this time intended for *Amethyst*. Kerans made no attempt to reply, but continued on his way. The rattle of small-arms fire burst into the night. To Kerans's complete bewilderment and pleasure, the Communist patrol boat suddenly opened fire with Oerlikon tracer on the Communist shore batteries. He could only assume that the captain of the patrol boat had completely lost his head in the sudden chaos. Then *Amethyst* came under heavy artillery and small-arms fire from shore. The shells sang overhead and fell around her.

"Full ahead both!" Kerans ordered. Almost as he spoke, the ship heeled over about thirty-five degrees to starboard. *The engineroom's hit*, Kerans thought despairingly. He was sure he could hear water gushing in. "Open fire!" he shouted, "and keep on firing until the end!"

Because of the extreme list, B-gun could not immediately be brought to bear. *Amethyst's* Oerlikon and her four Bren guns stuttered and barked. Kerans looked around in the dying light of the second flare for a suitable place to beach the ship; a place to take him out of the line of fire from the batteries. He yelled down the voicepipe to Strain. "Tell French to flash a message to Hongkong." Then he dictated: I AM UNDER HEAVY FIRE AND HAVE BEEN HIT.

He had barely finished speaking when, almost miraculously, the ship righted herself. Kerans has never been sure what it was that caused *Amethyst* to heel over so sharply. The ship had not, in fact, been hit, but, probably, a large shell exploding in the water very close to her had created violent under-surface currents.

### We're Hit! We're Hit!

Stoker Winfield, at the voicepipe in the engineroom, heard the firing. Kerans's shout whistled down to him. "Make smoke!" A moment later, Winfield heard a loud, only slightly muffled explosion. *Amethyst* shuddered. Black smoke poured down the fan shafts into the engineroom. Winfield looked around him wildly, thinking, *We're hit! We're hit!*

The faces of the men in the engineroom were tilted, almost prayerfully, towards the deck. They looked bloodless and blank with surprise. Somebody shouted down the hatchway: "It's all right, mates! It's our own gun." The engineroom relaxed. "I'm planning the menu for my first meal at the Fleet Club in Hongkong," Leading Stoker Duncan McDonald boomed with mock solemnity. "You know what it's going to be? Steak and eggs and chips!" The men laughed nervously. Tension was still high.

By weaving like a ballet dancer and by making black smoke, *Amethyst* slipped past the merchant ship, the *Kiang Ling Liberation*. She had turned sharply to port and had switched on all her lights and was blowing crazily on her sirens.

*Amethyst's* B-gun managed to get one four-inch shell away—the explosion Winfield had mistakenly thought had travelled in the other direction—and, to Kerans's surprise, this caused a fire ashore. But as soon as *Amethyst* had gathered full headway again, he ordered the gun to cease firing. He feared that the giveaway flash with each shot would enable the Communist gunners to get a fix on the ship. Most of the small-arms fire from shore was passing well over *Amethyst*, but the 75- and 105-millimetre guns were dropping their shells close around her.

One large shell, in fact, whistled so close to the back of Kerans's neck that he turned, instinctively, as if it were possible for him to see it whiz by. He was surprised, and slightly unnerved, to note that the shell had cut through the wireless aerial, within inches of his head. As he turned, he also caught sight of flames up river, licking away near the surface of the water and reflecting in mad, upside-down activity. The merchant ship was now aground and fiercely ablaze. In spite of its lights, in spite of its sirens, the Communist gunners had made a target of the *Kiang Ling Liberation*! *Amethyst* herself had neatly slipped through the wild barrage. However, one thing was now certain: the gaff was blown. *Amethyst's* getaway was no longer a hard-held secret.

The frigate slipped past Rose Island, where she had gone aground so long before, without incident. A message was sent to that effect. Then reports came up from the engineroom that *Amethyst* was flooding badly from the one waterline shell-hole in the stern which they had been unable to repair earlier on. Pumps were put into action to keep the water in check. Kerans prayed: *"Dear God, don't let it flood so badly it will put paid to my steering."*

### A Steaming Hell

Down in the engineroom, Winfield was bathed in sweat. It poured out of his scalp and down his brow and into his eyes, making them smart with the salt. Near him, a man fainted with the heat. The temperature near the voice-pipe was 170 degrees; in the boiler-room, 130 degrees; on the manoeuvring platform, 125 degrees. Winfield left the voice-pipe while a mate took over and rushed up to the galley. He got a can of tea from Cook Griffiths and took it down to his mates in their sweating, steaming hell. There were only eleven men in the engineroom—one-third the normal complement—but before that night was over they had drunk ten gallons of tea. The moisture ran out of their pores in never-ending rivulets and they had to get it back into their bodies somehow. So they drank tea.

In the chartroom, Canteen Manager John McNamara followed the course. Beside him, sharing the small room, Ordinary Seamen James Bryson and Jack Day took turns at calling up the depths as they appeared on the echo sounder. There was not much light in the corner of the room near the echo sounder and they held up candles to get their readings.

Shortly before one o'clock in the morning, *Amethyst*, still pushing ahead at full speed, approached the river port of Kiang Yin where the Communists lay in wait behind their guns. Even the guns, however, were not the great danger. There was the boom. Ever since *Amethyst* slipped her cable, Kerans had thought about the boom at Kiang Yin. He had worried about it. He had turned it over and over in his mind, examining his chances of getting through it. Finally he had decided there was nothing he could do. It was a gamble, pure and simple. The ship's continued life, or her sudden, bottom-ripping death, depended on finding the channel through the boom to safety, and he was not even sure what kind of a boom it was.

Reports said it was a line of sunken ships, just under the surface, placed across the river so that nothing could go up or down except through a narrow, heavily gun-guarded channel. All the way down the river, clenching and unclenching his fists, Kerans thought: *We've got to find that channel.* He would have to risk the fire of the guns. There was always a chance that *Amethyst* would escape serious damage, even at point-blank range. But if she

Kerans's victory smile. When the ordeal was over, men were crying—and were not ashamed

ran headlong into the semi-sunken hulks, only one thing was sure: she would slice off her bottom; she would peel it off like the skin of a banana; she would let in the murky water of the Yangtse. And she would be finished.

Kiang Yin was just ahead.

Kerans strained on the bridge, listening for the first shell, throwing his eyes at the blank wall of darkness ahead. *Where is the damned boom?*

A flare shot with still, spine-chilling suddenness into the night. It echoed, silver-bright and falsely gay, in the broken surface of the water. As it did, artillery thundered and the river burst into a cauldron of climbing waterspouts. "Give me black smoke!" Kerans yelled down the voice-pipe. "Give me all the smoke you can make!"

### Gamble At The Boom

Then, just ahead, Kerans saw a light. *The boom,* he thought. But there was one light only and his chart had showed that there should be two, with the channel, thus marked, between them. Near the light he could make out the grim silhouette of a patrol vessel. Thin lines of tracer fingered out from it erratically toward *Amethyst*. None of the bullets found home.

They were almost on the light, and Kerans had to make his gamble. Should he pass it to the right or to the left? There was no time to weigh the pros and cons and there were no pros and cons to weigh. Down the voice-pipe, he spoke to Leslie Frank, at the wheel. "Two degrees to port, cox'n," he said, making it sound crisp and decisive, as if he had no doubt at all. Then, silently, he prayed that his guess was correct.

The light was a hundred yards away. Then fifty. . . . Ten. . . . And he was through, clean through, without a scratch or a scrape. The ship was slicing full speed down the flooded Yangtse toward the open sea. But there were still many miles of river to navigate. There were still many guns to pass. Kerans began to shiver a little. For the first time, he noticed that the night had become cool.

At about half past two on the morning of July 31, with *Amethyst* still running at full speed on both engines, Day croaked up the voicepipe to Kerans: "Echo sounder reads only three fathoms of water, sir!" Three fathoms of water left little margin for safety. *Amethyst's* normal draught was about nine feet. Kerans ordered Frank to steer sharply to starboard into deeper water. He had barely got the words out when he saw a patrol vessel just ahead. His heart sank. Was this another control point? Kerans decided that his only move was to get as close to the vessel as possible and smother her fire in *Amethyst's* superstructure. He shouted new orders down to Frank, and the frigate scraped by the patrol vessel with a few inches to spare. There were no casualties, no damage.

At eighteen minutes to three, Kerans sent another message to Hongkong: ONE HUNDRED UP. One hundred miles of the mad dash was now behind them. There were still forty miles to go, and there were still the giant, long-range coastal guns to pass at the Woosung forts.

At four o'clock Kerans, peering ahead into the night, suddenly saw that *Amethyst* was running straight for a junk, sailing without lights. They were almost upon it and nothing could prevent a crash. The ship sliced the junk neatly in two. *Amethyst* shook from bow to stern.

Frank had been taking benzedrine tablets regularly. He was the coxswain now, and there was no one to relieve him at the wheel. He had a bucket beside him in case it should be needed. Now and then he was brought a cup of tea and a sandwich. He could see nothing from the wheelhouse, but steered steadily as Kerans commanded. Suddenly, the ship trembled with shock. *We're hit!* he thought. Then Kerans's voice flowed coolly out of the voice-pipe: "That is a junk, that was." Frank exhaled heavily.

### Through The Enemy Searchlights

Meanwhile, H.M.S. *Concord* moved into the wide mouth of the Yangtse to cover *Amethyst* if she came under the fire of the Woosung guns.

COME QUICK, Kerans signalled to her.

He could see searchlights sweeping the water far ahead, probing the thinning night. The sky above was still black, but far to the east he could see a lighter strip of heaven. He still hoped to get out of the river before dawn. The river was getting wider all the time. As the ship neared the forts, Kerans moved her as far out from shore as he felt was safe. "Train B-gun on the forts," he ordered, "just in case." The men on the upper deck put on their tin hats and waited. Then as they came opposite the forts, a searchlight probed past the ship. It stopped. It swept slowly, carefully back. Kerans watched it, fascinated. The searchlight passed on.

The pastel shoots of dawn were spreading across the sky and *Amethyst* was as far out into the river as navigating hazards allowed. The Communists could not after all have spotted them. The big guns did not fire.

Kerans's voice burst over the intercom. "I want every man to give everything he has for the last leg," he said. His voice sounded almost cheerful. Down in the dim light of the engine-room, Williams grinned. He was very tired. Perspiration was running down his face and his body. "We'll make it now," he said to no one in particular. "We damn well will."

Leading Stoker Ormrod climbed up the ladder to the upper deck to see where they were. He came clattering down again. "There's a destroyer in sight," he shouted. "I think it's one of ours!" His voice was cracked with excitement. A couple of minutes later someone yelled exuberantly down the hatch: "*Concord* in sight!" Williams did not try to hide the quaver in his voice. "All right," he said. "We'll go up, one at a time, and have a look. Winfield, you take it first."

### *Amethyst* Rejoins The Fleet

The cool air hit Winfield like a wall of water. He stepped out on to the quarterdeck and looked around. *Concord* was close to them now. He could see the excited faces of her crew. A great cheer swelled across the water. Then *Concord* turned, her bow pushing into the wide, safe mouth of the river toward the open sea.

Winfield saw that, around him, some of *Amethyst's* men were crying, quite openly and without shame. Then he put a hand up to his face and discovered that his own cheeks were wet. He didn't care. He didn't care at all.

In the chartroom, McNamara grinned at Bryson. "Isn't it wonderful?" he said. Bryson's lips moved but nothing came out. He had talked himself quite hoarse over the voice-pipe, constantly shouting the depths up to Kerans. But the look on his face, the sheer relieved joy on it, spoke much louder than any words.

Frank, in the wheelhouse, thought: *I've been in the Navy for twenty-four years, but I've never felt like this before.*

Now Kerans sent his last message to the C.-in-C.: HAVE REJOINED THE FLEET. AM SOUTH OF WOOSUNG (he dictated to French). NO DAMAGE OR CASUALTIES. GOD SAVE THE KING.

They were out. THE END

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*Lawrence Earl's book, "Yangtse Incident, the story of H.M.S. Amethyst," is published by Harrap (price 10s. 6d.)*

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## THE SECRET INVASION

*Continued from page 9*

land them on the coast under cover of night. They were to be supplied with powerful explosives and lie in wait for the lorries as they tore along the road at dusk. If the venture succeeded, eighty members of German air crews would not leave for London that night.

The discussions between de Gaulle and Churchill took so long before agreement was reached, however, that the moon phase most favourable to the operation passed. The small team of sabotage agents were ultimately parachuted on to the Normandy coast. They were chagrined to learn that the Germans were no longer using the same road to the aerodrome. A British submarine re-embarked the frustrated agents during the night. One was missing.

In St. James's Square, Colonel Passy still awaited news of his first two agents to cross the Channel. He knew that the speedboat had kept its rendezvous as arranged without finding any trace of the two Frenchmen. But he was still hopeful. Then, one day just before Christmas, Duclos walked into the office in St. James's Square, as casually as if he had just got off a bus. Colonel Passy looked up in amazement.

"*Tiens,* Duclos! This is wonderful!" He gripped his colleague warmly by both hands.

"Well, I wanted to have Christmas in London."

Duclos sat down. He greedily accepted the first English cigarette he had seen for four months. Then he related how he and Beresnikoff had got to his home. When dawn came, however, they had found they were smack in the middle of one of the most carefully watched parts of the coast, alive with sentries.

Both men had kept their rendezvous with the speedboat and flashed their torches out to sea. But the coastal mist had hidden them from view.

### Secret Trip To Paris

In the guise of a peasant, Duclos had hiked along the coast by daylight, mapping in his mind the whole region from Arromanches to Le Havre. His colleague Beresnikoff had set off for the Unoccupied zone, and had not been heard from since. Duclos had then made for Paris. He had moved about the city with ease and made contact with a few old friends.

Among them he had formed the first network of the Free French espionage system in Paris. It lacked only portable radio transmitters.

When Duclos had finished his work in Paris he set out for the south. He had roved about, making contacts where he could. Finally, at Marseilles, he boarded an old cargo boat for Oran, crossed Morocco to Casablanca, found another cargo boat for Lisbon, and a third to London.

A fortnight later, Beresnikoff turned up in London. He had gone to Vichy and had been demobilized after explaining to the authorities that he had been lost in eastern France following the French collapse. (His demobilization had provided him with regular identity papers.) Then, after picking up what contacts he could, he had crossed the Pyrénées into Spain.

However, not all of the little team in St. James's Square were as lucky as Duclos and Beresnikoff on their first trip. D'Estienne d'Orves, for example, from the first wanted to go on a mission to France. Again and again he was turned down. There was a certain guileless honesty about the man that suggested unsuitability for the work. No amount of idealism and courage will save a secret agent if he cannot bluff convincingly.

Still, volunteers for the work were few and far between at Christmas, 1940. Finally it was decided to send d'Estienne d'Orves on a mission to Brittany, the home of the French Navy, where his connections would be useful. Portable radio transmitters had now made their appearance. One was allotted to him, together with a trained radio operator.

At nightfall on one of the last days of December, 1940, these two set out from the Cornish coast in a fishing boat. Soon, d'Estienne d'Orves was sending information back to London. He began to build his network in Brittany. Then, leaving his radio operator to carry on, he moved on to Paris. There he developed the network Duclos had started. Soon he returned to Brittany to re-embark.

### Caught By The Germans

While he was changing trains at Rennes, two men in civilian clothes fell into step on either side of him. His ribs were touched lightly with gun barrels. "Don't move, d'Estienne d'Orves, or we'll have to kill you."

Near the newspaper stand stood his radio operator. It was he who had indicated d'Estienne d'Orves as he stepped from the train. It transpired that the radio operator had sold himself to the Germans almost as soon as his chief had left. D'Estienne d'Orves died before a German firing squad.

The refinements of torture which the Germans ultimately used to extract information from agents had still to make their appearance. Plans were already being made to turn handsome apartments in the chic quarter of Paris into medieval torture chambers where agents could be forced to talk. Nevertheless, 1,500 such agents were yet to cross the Channel. The secret war was only beginning.

*The second instalment by Jerome Willis describes the grim cat-and-mouse battle fought with the Nazi torturers.*

*In John Bull next week*

## G.I. Joe stands by in Britain

HARRY HOPKINS toured the air bases in Britain where 14,000 U.S. airmen are now in training. His vivid report describes how they live in their world of plenty.

*Starting on January 13*

## A new-style thriller serial by Agatha Christie

JOHN BULL has secured exclusive serial rights of Agatha Christie's latest and most unusual thriller, *They Came to Baghdad.* While having all the mystery and surprise associated with Agatha Christie, this is a new departure for Britain's leading writer of detective fiction—a lively comedy-thriller with a topical touch.

# Ace of the rough riders

*by EDWIN PACKER*

**Trial motor cyclists like Fred Rist always expect a surprise round the bend—a crash, a medal, or a wife**

Rist takes a water splash fast and safely. "You're being challenged all the time," he says

IN 1923 A STURDY Middlesbrough lad named Fred Rist was given a special treat on his eighth birthday. He was allowed to ride around the fields of his father's poultry farm on an old two-stroke motor cycle. As he bumped over tussocks of grass, swerved to avoid indignant hens, and strove to keep the machine under him as it slewed and spun at slippery corners, his zest for cross-country motor cycling was born.

Rist is now thirty-five. The years between have made him an ace rider at motor cycle hill climbs, scrambles and trials, and since 1938 he has won more than 200 trophies. This year he captained the victorious British team in the International Six-Day Trial held among the Cambrian hills. He also collected his sixth gold medal, awarded to riders who do not forfeit a single mark throughout the trial.

"In this game you're being challenged all the time by the weather and conditions underwheel," he says. "You've got to concentrate every inch of the way, and there's always a surprise around the corner."

The route of the 1948 international trial in Italy —where Britain again won the first awards—lay along roads lined with palms and vineyards, and mountain paths with loose surfaces which skirted precipices of a thousand feet. "Rounding one of these tracks I found myself on top of a herd of goats. If I had braked hard and skidded I might have gone over the edge, so I kept going. Fortunately, the animals were so surprised that for a second they were motionless. In that time I had swerved through them."

### Point-to-points Over Hazards

More than half of the nation's 700,000 motor cyclists belong to the Auto-Cycle Union, which controls motor cycle sport in Britain. Local clubs organize weekend hill climbs; the steeper the gradient the better, provided that one or two competitors can reach the top. Scrambles are point-to-point races over country chosen for its natural hazards—boulder-strewn paths, ravines and water splashes, tracks thick with leafmould and obstructed by overhanging branches.

Routes for one-day trials are divided into sections, some of which are watched by judges. A rider who stops forfeits five marks; if he uses his feet to keep going he loses three; if he "dabs" with his foot to maintain balance he loses one. To get through with a clean sheet necessitates a "feet-up" ride without stopping.

Each day's route in international events is divided into about ten sections. To avoid loss of marks every section has to be covered in a set time: lightweight machines have to average 22½ m.p.h., the 500-c.c. models are expected to do 30 m.p.h. Rist points out: "These average speeds may not seem very high on paper, but in a six-day trial you're in the saddle for ten hours a day. Torrential rain will turn a sandy track into glutinous mud where competitors struggle like flies on a flypaper. Your speed may drop here to about 2 m.p.h. You've got to press forward on a good stretch to maintain the average speed required."

Any repairs done en route make the average speed harder to maintain. As only the rider is allowed to work on the machine he must have mechanical, as well as riding, ability. Before the British trial team is chosen, the "possibles" go for a selection test. Repair jobs such as changing inner tubes, fitting a throttle cable, drying the magneto contact breaker, dismantling the carburettor, are done against a stop-watch. Rist can change an inner tube in six minutes, a throttle cable in two.

In the Scottish Six-Day Trial he knocked a hole in the plate covering the oil pump while traversing a boulder-strewn track. His oil leaked out. To plug the hole he bought some chewing gum at a Highland shop. Then he found he could not chew it; he had had all his top teeth extracted a few weeks previously. A surprised villager chewed the gum for him; the hole was plugged. With tractor oil borrowed from a farmer he completed the trial and won an award.

Always mechanically minded, Rist volunteered for the Army when he was eighteen. "It seemed the best way to learn about all types of vehicles from motor bikes to tanks." In 1938, to test machines and equipment under arduous conditions, several mechanized battalions were asked to form motor cycle teams.

"I was then a corporal in the 2nd Battalion Royal Tank Corps," recounts Rist. "Our mob went to Red Road Hill on Bagshot Heath for the team selection tests. One at a time, in heats of six, we hurled our machines up a long, steep, sandy gradient. The two fastest qualified for further tests. I came third in my heat and said goodbye to my hopes of getting in the team."

But the persistence needed in a trials rider now showed itself in Rist. He suggested to the sergeant in charge that he should go along for the next two days and help to organize. The offer was accepted. Between heats Rist got in as much practice as possible on the climb. "The sergeant put me in the last heat of the last day, and I won it. Later I was given a place in the battalion team."

The 2nd Battalion R.T.C. won the trophy for the best British Army team competing in the 1938 International Six-Day Trial. With only a few months' competitive riding to his credit and no "international" experience, Rist was the only Army rider to win a gold medal, not losing a single mark. Next year the battalion riders won the Army championship, and collected six team awards and fifteen trophies in civilian trials.

### Romance On Mount Vesuvius

During the war, Rist took what opportunities he could to keep in trial trim. He was watched by a British nurse when he took part in an Army scramble on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius. They met afterwards, and are now married. "The first time I ever saw Fred," says his wife, "he was flying through the air on a motor bike. I was standing on the crest of a hill and as the riders swept up it they were carried off the ground at the top. Most of them landed on the front wheel and came off. I was told to watch how Sergeant Rist did it. He landed on his back wheel, and stayed on to win."

Leading motor cycle manufacturers now enter trade teams for all the big trials, and Rist is employed on the production side of a Birmingham motor cycle firm. The supremacy of British machines is due to improvements introduced as a result of motor cycle sports. America is one of Britain's three best customers for motor cycles, and British design is now being copied by U.S. manufacturers.

Switzerland acknowledges the hill-climbing qualities of British motor cycles by being our largest Continental customer. In this year's International Trial, Holland and Sweden both entered teams mounted on British machines. Britain's dominance in men and machines can be judged from the fact that not a single mark was lost by either British team on the 1,200 miles of rough riding. Austria, placed second, forfeited 1,225; Italy, in third place, 2,582.

Rist comments: "That's reliability for you. I wish those sportsmen who bewail our failures in ball games would follow motor cycling sport a little more closely. Britain's supremacy would act as a tonic."

THE END

# THE DESPERATE WOMAN

## Anne had paved the way. Now it was up to Simeon to make Slada talk. But, as Slada knew, things happened to men who talked

by MARTHA ALBRAND

SIMEON VERNON ESCAPED from Felseck prison, in the American Zone of Germany, to look for four m[illegible]. One of them, Paul Jablonsky, had committed the murder for which Simeon was serving a life sentence. Now, Simeon was out to get him—with the other three men as witnesses.

Together with his sweetheart, Anne Thiolat, Simeon had been in a German concentration camp during the war. They had escaped, and dropped their French nationality. Simeon became a Pole named Rodasky—and then he was captured. He was sent to work in a slave labour camp, and lost touch with Anne.

At liberation, he joined a gang of ex-camp inmates, led by Paul Jablonsky. Simeon almost worshipped him, and when Paul told him that he had seen Anne recaptured and shot Simeon had lost the will to live. Knowing that Paul had murdered the American soldier, he kept silent, and accepted the life sentence.

Then, after searching for him for five years, Anne arrived at the prison. Paul had lied. She was alive—and she loved him. But the work of tracing the four men went slowly, and at last, in a mood of desperation, Simeon had broken out of jail. Visiting Anne in Munich, he told her he was going to Hamburg to look for anyone who might have known Jablonsky.

But when Anne, after a trip to Paris, went to Hamburg, she found she was being followed by Robert Sawyer, a British intelligence officer with whom she was friendly. Sawyer loved Anne—and wanted to see Simeon back in jail.

She had a special reason for seeing Simeon. An answer had arrived to her newspaper advertisement offering a reward for any news of the men. Mink, mistress of Valentin Slada (alias Winter), one of the gang, offered to give information at her Berlin flat. Unable to contact Simeon in Hamburg, Anne, in desperation, went to Berlin herself and visited the girl. After bribing Mink for the key of the flat, she left, wondering how she was to get in touch with Simeon.

Then, in the street, a well-dressed man passed her, whistling a French tune. She stopped at a newspaper stand to make sure. She wasn't mistaken. It was Simeon.

### PART 4

#### *Interview With Slada*

ANNE picked up a paper, with trembling hands, and heard him ask the man behind the stand where the next subway station was. Then, as if not aware of him, she walked across the street, turned left, and hurried down the steps leading to that station. On the first platform a row of telephone booths caught her eye. Without a moment's hesitation she queued up. Once inside the booth, she saw through the window that Simeon was in line directly behind her. She sat down, dialled her *pension*, and while she spoke began to write rapidly on a sheet of paper from her notebook. She left the key with the note in the open telephone book.

They met when it had already grown dark, in the Marmor Palast, a cinema in the British sector. Without speaking they sat next to each other, holding hands under the coat he had taken off and folded on his lap. When Anne got up, he waited for a little while, and then followed her.

They walked along the Kurfuerstendamm, past ruins and rubble into a side street, past Anne's *pension*, talking in low voices. "I was so frightened," she said. "I thought you might not go back, that you'd never get here. I didn't know what was going on in your mind."

He touched her hand and held it. "To think that Winter may really be Slada!"

"I have no doubt that he is. Here's the key for the door downstairs. The caretaker must not see you, and I've made sure the girl won't be there."

The night was brisk and a new moon rose slowly into the sky. They were silent. There was so much they wanted to say, so much to tell, all the little details of what had happened within this last fortnight, but tension gripped them both, a tension which neither of them dared express.

Abruptly, without a farewell, Simeon left her. Before she knew it, the night had swallowed him up and she was standing alone in the street. She kept on walking. She was glad he had not said goodbye.

VALENTIN SLADA was a contented man. He had come a long way and the way had never been easy. At times he had thought he would never have a home he could call his own, enough money to pay for rent and food and a pair of soft, kittenish arms to embrace him.

He looked upon this period of his life as the best time he'd ever had. Without Paul, he knew he wouldn't be sitting here in a nice, four-room apartment, with enough money to sleep without worry, and a secure position that promised a future. He put down the newspaper he had been reading and crossed his arms behind his head. The leather of the armchair was cool and caressing against the backs of his hands. It was good to know that he owned a leather chair, and a smile of well-being spread over his narrow face. For a while he sat without moving, staring across the living-room and dreaming about the future. He had great plans for the years to come.

Presently, lost in thought, he pulled a toothpick from his pocket. Solid gold. What crazy desires a man could have during his lifetime. This thin, long, gold toothpick had represented luxury to him ever since, as a little boy, he had caught a glimpse of the mighty man his father worked for, sitting there with a gold toothpick dangling from his breast pocket. Slada began to pick his teeth.

He heard a knock at the door. Mink, he thought. Of course. She had forgotten her key again. And though he was a little annoyed at having to get up from the low, comfortable chair, still he smiled. She was a charmer, all right, that little Mink. He'd almost married her the first week he knew her. Without Paul, he would have married her. But Paul had shaken his head. "You're too young to tie yourself down. One doesn't grab the first thing that comes one's way. Wait a while."

He rose from the chair and as he went out into the passage, he heard the knocking quite clearly. It sounded impatient and that very impatience made him feel wanted. He hurried towards the door.

"What's the idea of running off to the cinema and letting your old man sit down to dinner alone——?" He stopped short. A tall stranger stood in front of him, looking at him without saying a word. His silence made Slada feel extremely uncomfortable. "I'm afraid you have the wrong apartment."

He tried to close the door but it was too late. Unnoticed by him, the stranger had put his foot between wall and door, and, still not saying anything, still looking at him in that peculiarly intense way, he walked in.

"What do you want?" Valentin was frightened. "Who are you?"

Slowly the stranger took off his hat and at last he spoke. "Don't you recognize me, Valentin?"

Somehow the voice was familiar but Slada could not place it. He had heard it before, he knew; but when he had heard it, and where, evaded his memory. It came from the past, from many, many years ago, years he had almost forgotten because, as Paul said, one had to forget in order to carry on.

The stranger was leaning against the door, blocking it.

"Who do you want to see?" asked Slada. "I am sure you. . . ."

"I came to see Valentin Slada," Simeon said. "You see, Valentin, I haven't forgotten you."

All Valentin heard was the name nobody knew, a name he had buried with the past. Nobody knew the name except five people. He grew deadly pale. Rodasky.

"Rodasky," he said, slowly and loudly, as if he needed his voice to confirm what his eyes refused to believe. "Simeon Rodasky." He remembered the paper on Paul's desk telling the story of Rodasky's escape, and Paul's words: "What a fool! This will add years to his sentence."

THEY stared at each other silently. Despite his air of confidence, Simeon was still a little stunned at his good fortune. He knew he had never actually expected that his hopes would be realized. This ugly, frightened little man unwittingly became a symbol of his innocence.

"What have you come here for?" Slada was the first to speak. "I cannot give you any help. I can't harbour you. You can't expect me to get into trouble with the law."

He took another look at Simeon, at his well-groomed, smooth appearance. Rodasky didn't look like an escaped "lifer," nor did he look as if he needed help. Slada thought of calling the police, of somehow getting to the telephone inside, of handing over Rodasky as quickly and painlessly as possible. But Simeon would never let him pick up the phone and, in any case, he thought, in angry frustration, he would make himself suspicious if he asked the police to arrest Rodasky in the apartment, where he lived under an assumed name. Immediately he would be involved in questions and explanations.

"I don't want anything from you," Simeon said, laying his hand on Slada's shoulder, gently but determinedly forcing him to relinquish his place in the passage from where an outcry might be heard, forcing him along the short, narrow passage into the living-room, the door of which stood open. "I just came here to talk to you, Valentin."

Simeon sat down in the leather armchair. He seemed to be completely at ease, almost relaxed, with the hard glance gone from his eyes and the wide mouth crooked in a smile. Slada wondered if Simeon was carrying a gun. The thought of a weapon which might at any time be used against him sent a chill down his spine. He pulled out

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

The caretaker's chatter stopped abruptly. A door had opened farther along the passage

his leather cigar case and offered one of the remaining two to his visitor. Simeon shook his head and said nothing until Slada had lighted his own. Then he leaned forward a little. "I didn't think you would receive an old friend so coldly."

Slada didn't dare look at him. What was he implying? That he should play the part of an old comrade? Strangely enough, that seemed to be just what he expected.

"Well, it was quite a shock. You aren't prepared to see someone you've given up as dead walk into your apartment as if it were the most natural thing on earth. And then——"

"So you thought me dead?"

Slada shrugged. "Condemned for life: that's death, isn't it?"

Since he had read Anne's note in the telephone booth, Simeon had wondered about the best way to approach Valentin, had considered all possibilities, had wanted to take Anne with him, but had come to the conclusion that he must go alone. Alone he could remind Slada of the times when they had faced hell and high water together and perhaps re-create the old comradely feeling of years past. Alone with him, Slada might talk, but if he brought Anne, a witness, Slada would certainly not talk at all.

"Why didn't any of you ever write or come to see me?"

For a moment Slada did not reply, then he brushed the ash off his cigar and said slowly: "Perhaps it's difficult for you to understand—for anyone locked up to understand—that for those outside, life goes on. It's part of life not to burden oneself with the past. What good could any of us have done you? None. There is no time to feel sentimental about anything if you have to build up a new life."

"I went to prison for you," Simeon said. "I took the blame so that you could go on living. I think I had the right to expect friendship. Where would you have been if I hadn't confessed to a crime I never committed?"

"I didn't shoot the American," Slada cried excitedly.

The tenseness was back in Rodasky's eyes, and Slada felt his knees tremble. "You know, as well as I, that it was Paul. Anton and I were posted as guards. We were watching the entrance to the depot while Paul and Red went inside. We didn't even hear the shot. They came out running and then all hell broke loose. Don't try to pin the murder on me!"

"I know Paul did it. But where is he? Where are Paul and Red?"

"I have no idea," said Slada. "We split up after they let us go. In times like these everybody has to look out for himself."

"Exactly," said Simeon. "That's what I've decided to do from now on."

Slada did not know what to make of that. Simeon spoke as a man speaks who has nothing to fear. There was an assurance about him that made it hard to believe he was being hunted by the police. But he was. Slada had to keep that in mind.

"What do you mean?"

"Five years ago I was a sentimental, idealistic boy," Simeon said slowly. "And perhaps I was a fool. But what we went through affects every man differently. Some are turned into criminals by the same experience that makes others believe more deeply in humanity. Some, those who can't forget, break down, and those who can, don't care any longer. I see that you've stopped caring."

"Caring about what?" The cigar suddenly made Slada feel sick.

"About anything except yourself. And yet you knew kindness. How you have changed, Slada! I remember how concerned you were when I was sick, how you nursed me. . . ."

It was nice to think of oneself as kind and concerned about others. Yes, yes, thought Slada, it's only when you see that no matter how decent you are it doesn't get you anywhere that you

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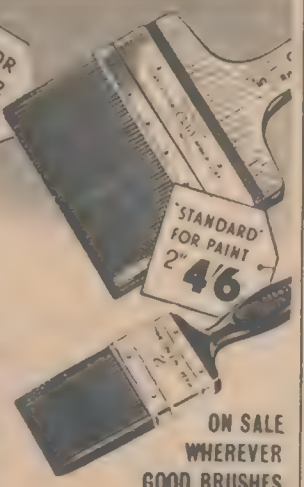
"STANDARD" FOR PAINT 2" 4'6



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change. It wasn't his fault. It was the fault of the times.

"I always thought highly of you," he said aloud. "Take my word for it, Rodasky. That was a gallant gesture of yours."

Then the idea dawned on him that Simeon had come to collect, in some way or other, a return for what he had done, and he grew frightened again.

He watched Simeon lean back in the chair and look at him. He wanted to take his eyes off Simeon's face, to escape that searching gaze, but it held him, and Slada sat motionless as if hypnotized.

"I had lost everybody I ever loved," Simeon said. "Except for a girl. A girl called Marie-Anne."

In spite of himself Slada nodded. "I remember. You showed me her photo."

"She was all I had left to live for. And while we were hiding out, during those two days after the murder, Paul told me that he had seen her killed with his own eyes."

"I know," said Slada. "He told me, too."

"Only it turned out to be a lie."

"A lie?"

"Marie-Anne is alive. She found me. Why do you think Paul lied, Valentin? He knew what I was like. He knew that if he took away from me the only thing I had to cling to, I wouldn't care whether I lived or died. And he was right."

For a moment Slada was genuinely taken back. What a dirty trick, he thought. "I didn't know that," he said. "Believe me, I didn't know that, Simeon."

"Neither did I. And I didn't suspect Paul even when I saw Anne for the first time. Then gradually I knew. Do you know now why I escaped; why I am here?"

SLADA rose. He started to walk across the room. And while he walked back and forth, Simeon spoke on.

"Valentin." For the first time now Simeon's voice was excited and, in its excitement, a little hoarse. "I have to prove my innocence. I won't be retried unless there are facts that warrant a new trial. You were a witness. You can give testimony that I was sick that night, that I was not even with you when——"

Slada cut in: "I am not against it in principle. Most certainly I don't want to have you locked up again, not after what you've just told me. I wouldn't like to have that on my conscience. But, on the other hand, you can't ask me to put my head in a noose. I'll have to think it over. I'll have to talk to a lawyer."

Simeon looked around the room, at the soft rug, the silver on the sideboard, the bookshelves. And his eyes hardened again. He knew that he had no way of forcing Slada. To use force would only have a catastrophic effect on this man on whom his whole future rested. He would shut up, insist he had never seen him, or swear that he was the murderer.

"I have no time to lose."

"I realize that," said Valentin. "I know that time matters to you. I'll talk to my lawyer first thing tomorrow. Come back here tomorrow evening, at seven, let's say, and I'll give you my answer."

He was playing for time and he was sure that Simeon was not aware of it, for he had made his voice sound cordial, even sincere. He rose, and when he saw Simeon rise, too, he even managed a smile. "You see," he said. "I'm still your friend. Not quite such an opportunist as you first thought. Tomorrow, then, at seven o'clock."

Half an hour later, Valentin slipped out into the night. Paul lived in Dahlem. In order to get there, Slada had to cross half Berlin and part of the Russian Sector. Cautiously, he had left all valuables at home, but now, as he stood on the subway platform, he debated whether he shouldn't return and exchange his good coat for an old jacket. While the train rushed through Russian territory there was often no light, and in the dark a lot of things had happened and would happen again and again. But he did not go back. He took the next train and arrived in that quiet suburb of Berlin shortly before midnight.

PAUL was sitting in the library, dressed in a dark red silk robe. Valentin smiled a little. Simeon would never recognize Jablonsky, for Paul, once he had made enough money, had vanished for months to return with an entirely new face and under the name of Friedrich Fliege. The best way to start a new life, he had explained, was to begin with a new face.

Even for Valentin it was often hard to recognize in this elegant, handsome man, the dirty, haggard tramp who had walked side by side with him through woods and fields and had slaved with him in the mines. But, like the house, Paul's elegance did not arouse envy in Slada's heart. He was much too modest, too shy a man ever to presume that he could fit into Paul's sphere of life. Instead, he took strength from it, sunning himself in his boss's glamour.

Paul looked up from his book. He didn't rise, but just asked, a little impatiently: "What is it?"

"I came to warn you," said Slada. He saw Paul frown, and went on to give a precise report. As he spoke, his voice became more and more the impersonal voice of a man who was not expected to have any ideas of his own, but was quoting facts he was supposed to know. Once, while he related his story, Paul leaned forward to pick up a bottle and pour out drinks. He handed one to Slada. When Slada had finished what he

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had to tell, Paul said casually: "So. I made a mistake. I could have sworn it was his girl. Well, that's that."

He poured another drink and began to sip it slowly. Somehow Slada felt disappointed that what had excited him so much should have no effect at all on Jablonsky. Paul, sitting there so calm and undisturbed, made his own fears seem rather foolish. Then, when he least expected it, Paul turned to him, his voice clipped and sharp. "You're sure you signed nothing that might commit you?"

"I told you, I signed nothing at all."

Paul rose, walked over to his writing desk and sat down. "Well, give me an exact description of what he looks like. What did he wear?"

He wrote rapidly and, when he had finished, looked up. "There, now," he said. "Tomorrow at seven o'clock, when he comes, you will pretend to be willing to act as his witness. You will tell him you saw your lawyer, and that you are going to take him there right away. You will take him to this address. No. I'll tell you where to go tomorrow. And you will be very sure to arrive there not later than eight o'clock."

"And meantime you will have called the police, who will find Rodasky, not expecting any danger. Is that it?" It made Slada smile. But suddenly, because he felt death so close, fear came back into his heart. "What if he talks? He knows now that Valentin Winter is Valentin Slada."

"Yes," said Paul slowly. "I hadn't thought of that. Well, I'll take care of that, too."

BECAUSE Anne didn't dare leave the *pension*, in case there was a message from Simeon, she had lunch in the small dining-room.

Why hadn't there been a message from Simeon? Last night she had suggested that they meet in the neighbourhood of the French compound early this morning, but he had refused. "Once Slada knows I am here, I am not safe any longer. He might denounce me. If it is Slada, I must be especially careful. You'll hear from me. Just stay where you are."

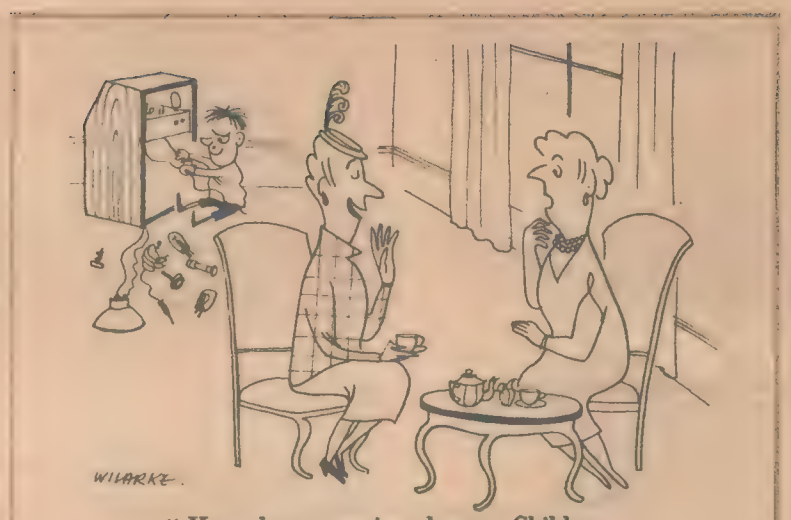
But it was hard to sit in the little room, listening for the telephone to ring, for the doorbell to sound, for a messenger to bring a letter.

Shortly after two o'clock, a delivery boy arrived with a big bunch of dahlias and a letter. When she tore open the envelope, the key she had given Simeon last night fell out, and she understood that she was to return it.

Like the one she had received in Hamburg, this was an elaborate love letter but not a desperate one. It asked her, among other things, to call her lawyer in Paris at once, to find out from him which lawyer in Berlin he could recommend. It also said that he hoped to see her at a restaurant for dinner if she was still free tonight and that it might be a good idea to bring Herr Winter along. Winter would certainly be at home at seven o'clock, but since one could never be sure of anyone, it might be better to fetch him personally.

The letter was so carefully worded that Anne had to read it twice before she understood clearly what it meant. Simeon had made an appointment with Slada at seven o'clock in his apartment but did not dare go himself, even though Slada apparently was not unwilling to be a witness.

At four o'clock, Mink arrived excitedly, took the envelope with the rest of the reward money and said: "You see, you didn't need to make such a fuss. My information was correct."




"He adores coming here. Children seem to know where they're welcome"

When Anne's call to Paris wasn't in by four thirty, she called the French Information Bureau and a free line was arranged for her. At five fifteen she met the man her lawyer had recommended at his office in the American Sector—a Mr. Korf. He was an elderly man who had studied law at the Sorbonne for a year and out of politeness spoke French with her.

When she had told him Simeon's case he seemed moved. "That's a terrible story," he said, "a story that could happen only in these wild times. Once you bring Slada up to me he won't have a chance. I know how to make men speak even if they've made up their minds to say nothing. Don't worry."

At half past seven Anne took the subway to Tempelhof. It seemed slower than yesterday, and she kept looking at her watch nervously. Would Slada wait?

As she rang the bell she thought she saw a man watching her. He was walking up and down in front of the house. Perhaps he was just waiting for his girl to come down and join him.

The heavy front door swung open and closed behind her before she realized that she had no way of leaving without a long, involved explanation. The caretaker nodded at her as if she were an old aquaintance.

"The Winter apartment," Anne said, and felt her heart beating in her throat.

"If it's Mr. Winter you want to see," the woman said, "you're too late. They brought him in an hour ago, an awful sight. He fell in front of a subway train. And if it's the girl, well, she got hysterical, and. . . ."

She stopped abruptly. A door had opened farther along the passage, and Anne saw a man coming out of the caretaker's room. He glanced sharply at the woman before turning to Anne. "Please come with me."

ANNE went up the three flights of stairs not knowing that she moved. As in a nightmare, she saw faces peep out of quickly opened and just as quickly closed doors, eyes stealing a glance at her, excited whispers when she passed the landings.

The detective following her touched her shoulder. "Through here, fräulein."

Through a half-open door, she could see a photographer packing his equipment and, as he moved out of sight, a terribly mangled leg dangling from a bed. She stopped short. A thought was forming in her mind, but before she could follow it through, she was pushed on and through another door.

In the little living-room a group of four men had gathered around the dining-room table. None of them rose as she was shown in but each one turned his head and looked at her, coldly sizing her up. Then someone barked, "Your name?"

To her astonishment Anne heard her voice ring out calmly, "Marie-Anne Thiolat."

Another voice said, "Search her."

A hand reached out for her and Anne drew back. "I am a French citizen and as such demand the right to get in touch with the French authorities immediately."

"It's all right, mademoiselle," a third voice said, a tired voice. "I am Colonel Bertrand. Your passport, please."

Anne saw an elderly man with a little moustache which made him look almost British.

A fourth man, older than the rest, with a heavy sabre-scar across the left cheek, whispered something to the French colonel which Anne could not understand. But Bertrand nodded and the German waved to one of the policemen at the door. "The girl."

A moment later Mink entered, followed by a thin, old man, gesturing wildly. "She is in no condition. She. . . ."

"It will only take a moment."

Mink seemed doped. Her face was swollen, her eyes dead. She clutched a toy animal, a black and white panda, and looked like a child forced to get up out of bed in the first hours of sleep.

The man with the scar addressed her. "You recognize in this woman the woman you saw yesterday?"

The word "woman" hit Anne as if someone had cracked a whip across her face. She straightened. Suddenly, two small fists were pummelling her. "You! I could kill you. It's all your fault. He was so queer all night. He couldn't sleep. You did it! You did it! You killed Valentin."

Someone drew Mink back, and the thin old man, obviously the doctor, said, "I told you she is still hysterical," and led Mink away.

"I am sorry," said Colonel Bertrand, opening Anne's passport.

The German took the passport after Bertrand had finished with it, and asked abruptly: "What exactly was your reason for coming to Berlin?"

"To find Valentin Slada, the man who lived here under the name of Winter. I had placed an advertisement in the paper promising a reward for any information leading to Valentin Slada, Anton Woiczi, Red Kruck and Paul Jablonsky. This advertisement was answered by the girl called Mink."

She didn't know how much Mink had told, or how much she had withheld. For Anne there was only one course; not to lie about anything unless she had to. She watched her passport make the rounds, saw each man open it, look quickly at her and pass it on.

"What did you want to see Winter about?"

"My fiancé, Simeon Vernon, was condemned to life for a murder he confessed to but did not commit. I wanted to find a witness for his innocence. All of those four men whose names I have mentioned know that Vernon was innocent."

There was a short silence, not the silence of surprise, but a silence betraying that she had confirmed something that had apparently been discussed before she entered.

"Undoubtedly you are aware of the fact that Simeon Vernon, alias Rodasky, escaped."

The man who was addressing her now was somewhat younger than the others, and when Anne bent slightly forward, she saw that his left hand was artificial.

"Yes," she answered. "I was questioned in Munich."

"When did you see Vernon last?"

"October 6, at Felseck."

"You are sure you haven't seen him since his escape?"

"Quite sure."

"When did you see Winter last?"

Because there was the faintest turning of heads in her direction, Anne was warned. "Yesterday," she said.

The man with the scar interrupted his younger colleague, unaware that he was coming to her help. "The key you made Mink give you . . . you didn't pass it on to your friend so that he could come here, unnoticed by anyone?"

"No."

"Will you please tell us what you did last night?"

THIS needed thinking about. She began to speak, slowly. "I wanted to take Slada by surprise and I wanted to talk to him alone. I was afraid he might not want to talk in company. I had therefore arranged with Mink that she should be out. I had dinner quite early in my *pension*, then I went to a cinema for half an hour, to kill time, then I came up here. Slada did not seem unwilling to give testimony in Vernon's favour. But he wanted time to reflect. So he asked me to come back today at seven o'clock."

"Then why are you almost an hour late?"

"I went to see the attorney my French lawyer recommended when I telephoned Paris this afternoon."

"His name?"

"Korf. Dr. Max Korf."

"But Winter did not expect you. He expected Rodasky."

Simeon had been right not to trust Slada, Slada, who in his eagerness to get home to close the trap, had taken a wrong step and fallen under a train.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Colonel Bertrand turned around, his chair scraping a little against the wooden floor. Over his shoulder he said casually, "The police were notified that Simeon Vernon—

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Rodasky—would be found here at seven o'clock. Why not tell us the truth?"

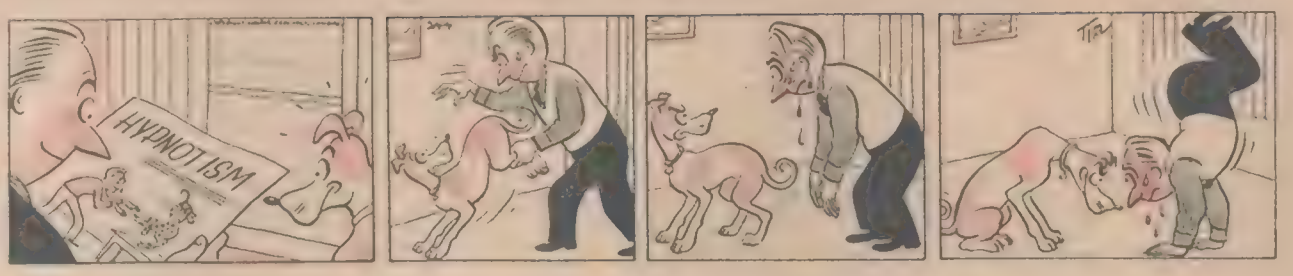
"Simeon in Berlin?" said Anne. "Are you sure?"

Bertrand was suddenly standing in front of her. "Mademoiselle Thiolat," he said in his tired, bored voice, "I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to put you on the next plane to Paris."

This possibility, which Anne had never considered, shattered her calm. She was too stunned to answer but she began to tremble, and turned her face away. The colonel shrugged, "You must understand that all this is causing us great inconvenience."

Anne swung around. Without reflecting that Bertrand certainly had the power to send her back and make it impossible for her ever to return to Berlin or, for that matter, to Germany so long as Simeon was not caught, and that she must be careful not to make him her enemy, she cried out, "Inconvenient? Is that what you said, *mon colonel*? How dare you use a word like that for a situation in which two of your compatriots find themselves? Vernon is innocent. I know you won't

## *OH, JOHNNY!* *by TIM*




believe me and I am not asking you to, but it is your duty as a human being and as a Frenchman to help me prove his innocence. That's what I demand of you!"

The colonel was shaken. Without giving him time to reply, Anne went on furiously: "What have you done for Vernon until now? Nothing. Nothing that might inconvenience you. He fought as well as you did for his country, though he was only a boy. And when he escaped from the concentration camp, he went on working against the Germans, your enemy and his."

The colonel kept staring at Anne, at her wide light eyes, her trembling lips. He said gently: "Mademoiselle, we cannot allow you to help or harbour a man who, rightly or wrongly, is considered a criminal."

Her heart was pounding in her ears and the colonel's face began to swim before her eyes. She caught her breath. "All I ask is to be permitted to stay on. What chance have I to help him now that you suspect him of being in Berlin? I don't know where he is, nor does he know where he can find me. You may not trust me, but don't you see that from now on every move of mine will be shadowed? Even if we were able to get in touch with each other, that would be the quickest way for you to arrest him."

The colonel turned his back on her and walked to the table. He sat down and scribbled something on a piece of paper and passed it on to the man with the scar.

She saw the man with the scar look up, nod at Bertrand, then look at her. "You may go now," he said. "For the moment we are satisfied." He hesitated and added, "One of my men will see you home."

He was not taking any risks, Anne thought. Not until the alarm was issued and Simeon's description given to all stations and made public, would she be able to walk by herself or talk to anyone without a guard. And she could not warn Simeon.

*To be continued next week*

## LET FREEDOM RING

*Continued from page 7*

made eight. Seven times he had read in the paper of sudden, pointless, brutal death, all within the year. Seven of the country's leaders. It was the work of a madman or a political assassin.

THE police car waited patiently outside Savile Row police station. It was four o'clock in the morning when Chief Detective-Inspector Stott came down the steps beside Richard and gestured towards it.

"Drive you home, Doctor?"

Richard smiled and accepted gratefully. A few minutes later the black car drew up outside the block of flats in Sloane Street where Richard lived. He turned to say thank you to Stott and saw that the inspector's eyes were closing; his head nodding forwards.

"Thanks for the lift . . . you should get some sleep, Inspector."

"Haven't got the time. I'll have a doss in my office, but I must be back on the job by nine and that's that. . . . Don't ever be a copper."

Stott didn't doss in his office. He slept in Richard's spare room. It didn't take much persuasion.

At breakfast time the inspector was refreshed and cheerful. "You answered a lot of damn silly questions with patience and intelligence last night, Doctor," he said. "Do you want to ask any?"

Richard was only too willing. Sandeman's strong dead face had haunted him for hours. "Are these murders being done by a political assassin or a nut?" he demanded.

Stott took his coffee cup—a vast one, brimful of hot and wonderfully fragrant coffee. "We think it's a nut," he said. "We've been through the political possibilities thirty times and found no links."

"There's always a card with the body, isn't there?"

"Every time."

Richard was silent for a moment. Then he thought aloud: "The wording of the card last night makes me pretty sure that the killer is mad. He might just as well have written 'schizophrenia' across the bottom in capital letters. . . . Bacon?"

"Thanks. . . . Go on."

"Would you like to know what the murderer will be like when you catch him?" Richard asked.

"Don't tell me you've got a photograph?"

"I've got a mental one—almost. . . . He'll be under thirty years old, probably. He'll be plausible and intelligent to talk to. The story he'll tell you will be one of persecution by shadowy, implacable figures, and it'll have you looking over your shoulder. It'll be detailed and factual—except that the facts will be unprovable. He may be confidential, at ease, and not in the least guilty. In the end, though, if he runs true to type, he'll suddenly become distant. You'll have the feeling that you're talking to an automaton—something quite cold, quite soulless and completely inhuman. Watch him when he becomes cold, Inspector." Richard continued. "It means that he will be identifying you with his enemies. He'll do his best to kill you."

Inspector Stott looked at his host with respect. "Thanks." he said. "You seem to know your job. . . . What do you think of this 'Let Freedom Ring' business? The words appear on all the cards."

Richard shrugged. "'Let Freedom Ring'—it probably means 'Heigho for the joy bells!' or 'Whoopee, I've done it again!' or something. He wants to tell the world that he's rid it of another menace — another shadow. The terrible thing is that he'll go on creating his own shadows. Such a mind has an inexhaustible fund of them. And he has a genius for picking the public men I like. If he'd stab one or two losers now and again, it wouldn't be so bad. . . . Good luck to you, Inspector. Come straight back if there's anything else I can do to help."

Stott took his bowler off the sideboard. "I shan't forget that bed." He nodded. "See you again, Doctor."

He did—quite soon.

FIVE days after the murder, Richard was reading a surgeon's report in his office. The report concerned a tumour which had recently been taken out of the brain of a patient called Baker. The surgeon was happy to report that a section of the tumour had shown under the microscope that it was not malignant.

"What's Mr. Baker's home telephone number, Elizabeth?" Richard asked his pretty young receptionist.

"Liberty 8901, Doctor."

Richard reached across his desk for the telephone, but as he did so a thought emerged from the recesses of his mind, and he paused with his hand on the receiver. He sat motionless for thirty seconds, staring at the dial on the instrument. Then, with a suddenly decisive gesture—the gesture of a man who has made up his mind against the promptings of logic—he dialled a number. The number was not Liberty 8901, but Whitehall 1212.

"I want to speak to Chief Detective-Inspector Stott, please."

Stott came on the line a minute or so later.

Richard said: "I have a barmy idea, Inspector. Are you in the market for barmy ideas today?"

"If it's about the murders, we're buying anything."

"Can I see you?"

"Yes. When?"

"Now."

"Right you are. Come on round."

IT was a house in Sidney Street, Chelsea. Richard and Stott descended from a taxi and mounted the steps. A police car cruised by innocently and Stott nodded to Richard, who pressed the bell marked Vivian—one of four, because the house was divided into flats.

The door opened. A young woman wearing an apron looked at them with innocent inquiry.

"Good morning." Her voice was puzzled, but not perturbed.

"Good morning, madam. My . . . my name is Buchanan — Doctor Richard Buchanan—and this is my colleague, Doctor Stott. We are doing research on behalf of the Ministry of Health. I wondered if you would mind my asking a few simple questions. . . ."

She was a tall woman with a square, intelligent face—not beautiful, yet by no means ugly. Her hair was cut short. She looked competent, forthright and sensible.

"I suppose it's my duty to say yes," she said. "I hope you won't mind my saying that I hate bureaucracy. Please come in."

They went into a pleasantly furnished sitting-room. The girl led the way. Out came a sheaf of official-looking papers from Richard's brief case. He took the cap off his fountain pen.

"Is it Mrs. or Miss Vivian?"

"Mrs."

"Have you any children, Mrs. Vivian?"

"None."

"So you live in this flat alone with your husband?"

"My husband was killed during the war," she said quietly.

The pen paused over the form and Richard glanced up at her. "I'm sorry," he said.

"So am I."

Tenseness crept into the atmosphere. Only Stott seemed unaffected by it. "So you live quite alone, Mrs. Vivian?"

"Quite alone," she answered, with a breath of defiance in her voice. "No lover — no relatives — no entanglements."

Richard took a deep breath. "The . . . the er . . . purpose of this inquiry is to examine the emergency arrangements incorporated in the Health Scheme. Supposing you were to be taken ill during the night, what exactly would you do, Mrs. Vivian?"

She smiled at him, making him feel childish. "Telephone my doctor."

"Who is?"

"Dr. Bottomley."

"How far away does Dr. Bottomley live, Mrs. Vivian?"

"At the top of the street—say two hundred yards."

"I see."

And so it went on. For ten minutes Richard manufactured questions. He was impelled to carry on with the interview, hoping against hope that something would emerge which would lead them to the thing they sought.

Eventually he had to stop his questions. He could think of no way of prolonging them. He stood up, and Stott stubbed out his cigarette end and reached for his hat. Mrs. Vivian also stood up.

"Well, thank you, Mrs. Vivian. You have been very helpful."

She smiled and inclined her head. Richard fastened his brief case and glanced apologetically at Stott. The policeman was imperturbable as usual. Behind the weather-beaten face there was a shrewd and active brain. Richard wished desperately that he knew what was going on in

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that brain. He found out—suddenly, and in a fashion which caused him to widen his eyes at the extraordinary self-confidence of the massive policeman.

"We let Freedom ring, Mrs. Vivian," Stott said calmly. "There was no answer, so we came round to find out what was up. This Ministry business was a front."

The girl stared at them, her hands frozen in an attitude almost of supplication. She licked her lips. "I don't understand."

"You asked for help, didn't you?"

She retreated, gazing at them fiercely. The tension in the room was unbearable. Richard wanted her to act. He wanted her to become indignant, to threaten to call the police, to show them the door—anything.

"What do you know of the Lords of Power?" Her voice was harsh and the question as sudden as a rapier thrust.

"Nothing, except that they exist." Stott spoke calmly, revealing no triumph.

"They are evil," she said abruptly. "They have more power than you or I could ever aspire to. That is why we shall have to attack them physically. Now that we are three, it will be easier. It was clever of you to let Freedom ring."

Stott made his first mistake. "We want you to come with us, Mrs. Vivian," he said. "We have a safer place to hide than here. I'll call a car."

The girl stared at him. "Fool!" The word was loaded with contempt. "Safer! I know how to protect myself. You know nothing. If they knew that you had joined me they would send you mad in a week. They would make you dream unspeakable things. You must stay here where I can protect you. We must all sleep within a pentagon, guarded by words of power, by cleanliness and by ritual. . . ."

RICHARD saw it happen. Her face fiercely excited, she had welcomed them—as underlings, perhaps, but as welcome underlings. Suddenly she became distant. Her eyes opened wide; and a sort of coldness entered the room. She retreated—by one step physically, but by thousands of miles mentally. "I see," she said and the sibilance of the S made it sound like a snake's hiss. "They want me to leave my refuge. They sent you to fetch me. You shall not. YOU SHALL NOT!"

Richard stepped forward. "No, Mrs. Vivian. We do not come from the Lords of Power. We are friends. You must believe us. We want to help you."

"Liar! LIAR, LIAR, LIAR!"

Her hand was in a drawer in the chest beside her. It emerged, and Richard recognized the knife. It was identical with the one he had seen protruding from Sir Basil Sandeman's shoulder. It was a kitchen knife of the most ordinary kind, but its blunt edge had been ground and sharpened. She held it with a terrible, familiar confidence. Then she came across the room towards them. She was stealthy but very quick.

Stott picked up a chair. He held it easily, regardless of its weight, with the legs pointing away from him. He walked towards the mad woman. Richard was, for a moment, too petrified to move. She kept the knife behind her back. Stott still walked forwards. She retreated. Her left hand closed about an ornament. She flung it with a round-arm movement at Stott's head. He raised the chair to ward it off and, lithely, she lunged forwards, the knife darting towards his stomach. Down came the chair. The legs caught her shoulders. Stott heaved forwards and his weight carried her. She staggered back until she was pinned against the wall.

Richard leaped forward. He had wound his handkerchief round his hand, but the knife cut through the handkerchief and he felt the sheer agony of cutting—the terrible, nerve-shrieking smoothness of the razor edge slicing across the back of his hand. His other hand clamped down on her wrist and he banged her knuckles against the wall.

She seemed to feel no pain. The strength in her arm was frenzied. He clung on and banged—bang, bang, bang! He could not let go, must not let go! Regardless of the ache in his wounded hand and the blood which was soaking his handkerchief, he dared not let go.

Stott moved. He dropped the chair. His great left arm swung above it and encircled her throat. The other hand reached the back of her head and pushed it forward. Breath was cut off from her lungs. "Hang on." Stott said. "Just hang on like hell."

She was struggling with ten times the frenzy she had shown before. Richard's muscles ached, and the tenseness of his hand made the blood gush from the wound in a steady stream which stained the clean front of her overall and ran up his arm to soak his shirt beneath the coat sleeve.

She struggled. The girl's eyes were eloquent with hatred, the terrible, lonely hatred of the mad, who see every man's hand against them.

The knife wavered in mid-air. The girl's other hand was scratching Stott's face, carving blood-stained grooves in the flesh. Stott might have been made of iron. He closed his eyes and endured it.

After half a minute she weakened. Stott tightened his hold inexorably. She lurched. Richard felt the strength ebbing from her knife arm. Her knees crumpled. The terrible eyes, made more terrible by the way asphyxiation caused them to bulge in their sockets, became blank. She was unconscious.

Stott released his hold and laid her gently on the floor. Then he took a rug and rolled her in it—tightly, so that her arms were pinned to her sides. He walked across the room to the telephone. It was over.

THE Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Bankside, smiled with the greatest amiability at his two visitors. Inspector Stott's large, rubbery face was half-concealed behind strips of sticking plaster and Dr. Buchanan had a very professionally bandaged right hand.

"Tell me how," the Commissioner said contentedly.

Stott turned to Richard and waved his hand generously. "Doctor Buchanan's story, sir. He did the thinking."

"Well, Doctor?"

Richard smiled. "Thinking is hardly the word," he said. "I had a hunch. Vanity is common in a lunatic. In their moments of triumph, schizophrenics think they can conquer the world. The words 'Let Freedom Ring' stuck in my mind. Then one day my receptionist told me the telephone number of a patient—it was Liberty 8901. . . ."

Sir Edward looked politely baffled.

Richard pushed the telephone instrument on the desk towards the commissioner. "Dial FRE, Sir Edward," he said. "FRE, the first three letters of 'freedom,' or of Fremantle. Now the last four letters of 'freedom' are EDOM—and E is also 3 on a London telephone dial. So is D, O is also nought or zero, and M is also 6. So when you let Freedom ring, you ring Fremantle 3306."

There was admiration in Sir Edward's voice. "So vanity made her insert that very risky clause in each of her messages, Doctor?"

Richard made a doubtful gesture with his bandaged hand. "Partly vanity," he said. "But Stott and I decided that she also wished to attract recruits. She worked this out as a sort of test, probably. If somebody thought the way she did and solved her puzzle, he would be worthy of joining her. Don't look for what we think of as logic in the mind of a madwoman, Sir Edward."

The Commissioner shook his head. Then, with a strange fascination, he dialled Freedom.

There was a pause and the ringing tone sounded in the receiver. "'Ullo," said a voice. "Fremantle double three—O—six."

"Commissioner of Police here. Who is that speaking?"

"Constable 'Iggins speaking, sir. Anything I can do for you, sir?"

"Nothing, thank you, Higgins," Sir Edward said mildly. "I was just amusing myself."

"Yes, sir," said Constable Higgins. "I fully understand, sir." He was lying. He did not understand. The pastimes of the Commissioner of Police and the subtleties of a demented mind were closed books to Constable Higgins. Probably he was fortunate. There were two men in London who had watched the mind of Mrs. Vivian in action, and they would never forget it. THE END

# LIVING LANGUAGE

*by George Beardmore*

## WHY WE SAY . . . SWINGING THE LEAD

**SAILORS heave the lead (never swing it) to find the depth of water. It's a skilful job, too. But to the uninitiated soldiers travelling in troopships, this business of throwing overboard a weighted cord, taking it out to look at it and throwing it back again, seemed simple.**

**To them "swinging the lead" was the equivalent of taking things easy while the other fellows did the work, and the phrase became an army term for malingering.**

## THE ANGRY MOUNTAIN

*Continued from page 13*

our grapes would never grow. And without that liquid fire we could never squeeze out the wine for which Montilla is famous!"

"We're with you, *Alcalde!*" impatient voices shouted. "Tell us what to do. There's no time to be lost."

Padella glared around. "You know the emergency plan. We have rehearsed it many times. Our comrades down in Segarra have promised us shelter and food if we need them——"

A fresh explosion shook the village. The Old Lady was now weirdly beautiful, juggling with balls of yellow fire. A deep drumming noise seemed to come from the very centre of the earth. A brilliant flash from the crater—and now there were cries of real terror, for the whole top of the mountain had disintegrated: new craters appeared below the old one, each throwing an incandescent shower upon the village beneath.

A couple of seconds later Montilla felt the greatest shock of all. It seemed that every building was shoved back violently. Walls bulged for a moment, returned to vertical and then, as in a slow-motion film, crumbled. Splinters of hot rock rained viciously upon the empty Plaza de la Constitucion.

"The Fingers! *Santisimo Virgen*, the Fingers!" Gesticulating, people pointed upwards. The Fingers were the first prongs of orange lava hanging from the sunless sky. Already they were growing visibly longer, and one of them pointed straight at Montilla. This was what Mayor Padella had feared above all else. This was what the experts had said could not happen.

"To your posts!" he cried. "We are going to evacuate the village!" Then he dashed back to his house. Part of the roof had fallen in, and he had to climb a pile of rubble to get past the door. Fortunately, the telephone was still workable. A message from Segarra said that a rescue party was on its way. Then Padella went out into the choking streets again and made his way down to the wine vaults.

Above the village, level with the roof-tops, the glowing lava streams were fanning out. They moved more slowly now, but their weight and volume increased. Still the main finger was pointed at Montilla.

Down at the wine vaults, Mayor Padella supervised the loading of great vats of wine on to light motor trucks: wine was Montilla's capital and must be saved at all costs. The harvest was lost; before dawn tomorrow every vine-terrace the village owned would be buried in lava. But Padella had one further anxiety.

"The new vines," he said gruffly to Ramón, whom he met in what remained of the Plaza. "I am going to try and save some of them."

One of the terraces just below the Magdalena Church was planted with experimental vines. By cross-breeding with the Chasselas grape, which had never before been tried in volcanic soil, Padella hoped to produce a grape so fine and large that Montilla wine would be doubled in quality.

"If we can take away one or two of them, or at least a few cuttings, we may be able to save several years' work!" the mayor insisted.

"*Alcalde!* Are you mad? The lava has already entered the village! It is moving at the speed of a man running!"

"Rubbish. My reckoning is — not more than three kilometres an hour. I'm going half-way up to the church in the truck. I can take cuttings, get back to the truck and be away in ten minutes."

"Let me come with you, *Alcalde*," Ramón urged.

"No, Ramón. You will stay here and look after Paquita. The lava will be right through the village soon. You must see that everyone gets away in time. Where is Father Ignacio?"

"Nobody knows. We've looked everywhere for him."

"*Mi madre!* He'll be cut off."

Ramón seized Padella's arms, trying to detain him. "So will you, *Alcalde!* You can't risk your life like this. Montilla needs you——"

"Montilla needs the vines more," Padella snapped. He shook himself free. "I will do what has to be done and then join you. I forbid you to follow me, Ramón."

From the eastern end of the village came the dull thunder of falling masonry as the glowing sea bulldozed its way through walls and brought roofs crashing down. Padella put the truck into bottom gear and roared up the black hillside. The vehicle, bucking like a rabbit, negotiated incredible gradients. When at last the engine protested, Padella braked at an angle and got out. The climb, on all fours, to the vine terrace was comparatively easy.

His work was quickly done. His arms full of cuttings, he dropped from terrace to terrace, scrambling with knees, elbows and heels, wondering why he could not find the truck. Then he saw it, far below, overturned and in flames, behind a moving wall of mud. On all sides he felt an immense boiling mass closing in upon him. His retreat to the village was clearly cut off. He could only make for the church, which stood isolated on a little hill. As he stumbled up to it, he knew he had come not only for the vines, but to look for Father Ignacio, and the thought made him happy.

Inside the church it was now quite dark. "Father Ignacio!" No reply. He shouted again: "Father Ignacio!"

A strange hissing noise and an overwhelming heat told him all he needed to know. The wall near the altar was bulging in a fantastic manner, as if a giant were leaning against it.

"*Olé!*" A faint voice from high above. "*Olé!*"

It was Father Ignacio, calling from the tower. Still clutching his vine

*THE HUMAN MACHINE*

## That Foolish Heart

**THE capacity of the human mind for self-deception is unbounded. If, as a cynic said, speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts, perhaps reason was invented to conceal his motives—even from himself!**

**For the curious thing is that, though others can so often see through "explanations" of action, the explainer really does believe what he says.**

**The heart is a bad counsellor. It helps us to fool ourselves.**

*by ROFFE THOMPSON*


**More power for more people but...**

TODAY the nation has more power than ever before. This December, British Electricity have more than a million more horse-power in service compared with this time last year.

*But* the number of industrial, domestic and commercial consumers also grows each year. More than 1,000,000 more consumers are being supplied now than before vesting day; and nearly 30% more electricity is being consumed now.

That is one obvious reason why even the increased power now available is not yet enough to meet the maximum simultaneous demands of consumers at the "rush" or "Peak Demand" Hours. And why "Power Cuts" unfortunately cannot be ended—unless you help!

**THE PEAK PROBLEM**

Electricity cannot be stored on a large scale. Enough generating plant must therefore be provided to meet the maximum simultaneous demands of consumers.

Unfortunately there is not at present always enough generating plant available to supply consumers' "Peak Demands". And when demand exceeds supply, some load must be shed; that is what causes "Power Cuts".

At times when there is not a "Peak Load" greater than can be met, and always at night-time and during week-ends, there is some generating plant idle, waiting to supply your need.

**THE SOLUTION**

By using your electric appliances, particularly electric fires, as little as possible during times of "Peak Demand", and when you hear a B.B.C. warning, you can limit or eliminate "Power Cuts". At other "Off-Peak" times "Electricity is at Your Service". Use your electricity "Off-Peak".

The usual "Peak Hours" at this time of the year are 8 to 9.30 a.m. and 4 to 5.30 p.m. (Mondays to Fridays).

**Use Electricity OFF-PEAK**

BRITISH ELECTRICITY

**WHERE THERE'S A CROWD THERE'S DANGER...**

Crowded buses and trains, cinemas and offices are the breeding grounds of the Common Cold germs. Beware of coughs and sneezes, sprinkle a few drops of Penetrol on your handkerchief and inhale freely. The pleasant soothing antiseptic vapours kill the germs and prevent infection. Never be without a bottle of Penetrol Inhalant either in your pocket or handbag and remember this simple rule—

2/3 at all chemists

Sprinkle a few drops of

**PENETROL**

on your handkerchief —inhale freely and prevent infection

# PRIZES VALUE OVER £1,000 TO WIND UP THE OLD YEAR!

## TRIPLE 1st PRIZE

## £500 CASH PLUS HAMPER

**and Celebration Weekend**

**£50, £25—each plus Hamper and Celebration Weekend for Two**

Winners and chosen companions will be invited to JOHN BULL'S New Year celebration party in London. Arrangements include conducted tour of London, trip to Windsor, seats for Olympia Circus and Celebration Party to meet Johnny Goodbullet, the *Bullets* bulldog and the famous ARCHIE ANDREWS.

(Extra cheque if preferred to Weekend Award.)

**£22.10s.**

**YEAR HAMPER**

**30 NEW YEAR HAMPERS**

**2,000 PRIZES of 2s. 6d.**

**NOVEL SURPRISE BONUSES**

***—see coupon below***

PICTURED here are some of the highlights in a weekend of thrills soon to be enjoyed by *Bullets* winners at JOHN BULL'S New Year celebration. This final 1950 offer, open one week only, brings your last opportunity to join the coming party.

Look through the long list of prizes and study the *Bullets* rewarded this week—then get busy on your entry for the £895 cash, party invitations, hampers and valuable surprise bonuses!

### Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

The World Picture
War Clouds
On Our Hands
The Chinese
Time After Time
Bloodstained
Cure For The Blues
Melody Of Yesterday
On The Run
It's A Puzzle, But
Fun Of The Fair
Her Beloved
Man From The Backwoods
Blushing Unseen
At The Night Club
Auntie's Cold
Gallantly
The Recruiting Sergeant
Dirt Cheap
Hurtling Through Space

**Incomplete "Examples" see instructions**

"You Want A.....!"
..... In The Air
Here To .....
Blessed With .....
.....For Mrs. Mop
If..... Only Knew

**RULES** 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated Jan. 27, and in JOHN BULL, dated Feb. 3, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

**NOTE.**—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

### POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,764 (or Xword 716), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

### GIANT "MAGIC LAMP" OFFER NEXT WEEK!

The famous Liberty horses will be seen at Bertram Mills Circus at Olympia

## "Bullets" Winners 1,760

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Hamper: H. Bostock, 8 Amilda Avenue, Ilkeston, Derbyshire: DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER MISSING TOP—MISSUS, TOPS!

£50 plus Hamper: A. E. Stamper, 29 Hasfield Road, Liverpool: DOESN'T SEEM TO MEND—OR MIND, BROKEN WORLD.

£25 plus Hamper: H. H. Adams, 46 Seymour Road, St. Albans: LIVING ON CHARITY—PEACE—UNTIL "CHARITY" *Lives*.

OTHER AWARDS: £20: F/Sgt. R. C. Brooks, R.A.F., c/o 50 Topcliffe Road, Thirsk: IF THERE WERE NO FRONTIERS—MAN COULD "ATTACK" *Deserts*. £15: R. F. Meek, 83 Alton Gardens, Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea: FRIEND FRITZ—FOR FRITZ? *We're* "CHALLENGED"! £10: B. Riley, 47 Hartington Road, Liverpool: HUMANITY'S ROAD—REASON OUR STREET'S UNFINISHED. £9: H. Tame, Carhampton, Minehead: DOESN'T SEEM TO FIT—"SICKLE," HALF OF "GLOBE." £8: J. H. Harris, 2 Gelli Road, Tonypandy: UNDER HER WING—*And* SKIN, BRITAIN'S MOANERS. £7: S. H. Bott, "Clemo," Oak Avenue, Christchurch, Hants: IF THERE WERE NO STICK-IN-THE-MUDS—"PULLING JOHN OUT," EASIER. £6: H. W. Turner, 2 St. Barnabas Villas, London, S.W.8: "HENRY, YOU'RE WEAK!"—MANGLE SEEMS TO SQUEAK!

(Above 7 winners each also receives Hamper.)

For five winners of £5 plus Hamper, and five of £2 10s. plus Hamper, see this week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

Winners of 200 Fowls have been notified, and 2,000 2s. 6d. Postal Orders posted.

# CASH AND FOOD PRIZES FOR XWORDS!

## THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

**Across Clues** XWORD 716

1. One prefers not to have to sleep on such a bed
3. At invitation to a party, a child's eyes may seem to do this
8. Some women are apt to put too much on this
10. Frequency of these can graphically be shown by means of charts
13. Dragging heavy load up hill, a powerful horse is sometimes this
14. Some people who ardently pursue this become very hard
15. Shallow one isn't at all likely to prove dangerous

**Down Clues**

2. Even if only average, one may well be worth big sum of money
4. The best ones don't waste words
5. It's risky to take one in the dark
6. In some cases develops with amazing rapidity
7. Many of us have felt real pity for man in one
9. In the case of some orators, it is impossible to mistake their this
11. One might well be peeved at being wakened out of deep sleep by such a sound
12. M.P.s pay more attention to one than they did a year or two ago

## £100 FIRST PRIZE

**AWARDS VALUE £25**

amongst 1st Runners-up and up to

**50 JOHNNY-BASKETS**

each value £2

Strong but elegant Shopping Baskets made by blind workers and filled with larder luxuries—one with each Runner-up Award value 10s. or over

UP TO

**500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES**

one for each 2nd Runner-up

## 2 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 712

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1. Load, 3. Coat, 6, Cheek. 9. Hack. 10. Halls. 14. Heads. 15. Meat. DOWN: 2, Decay. 4. Talk. 5. Burn. 7. Reader. 8. Dail. 11. Stout. 12. Cave. 13. Deal.

TWO £100 SHARERS: J. Mullaney, 29 Avenue Street, Portwood, Stockport, Cheshire; M. Powell, 12 Southdene, Gaddesden Row, Hemel Hempstead. Each winner also receives Grand Xmas Dinner.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 67 entrants, each of whom receives Xmas Fowl and Pudding in addition. Useful "Signposts" to 2nd Runners-up.

EXAMPLE ..... **6d.**

BULLET .....

EX. ..... **6d.**

B. .....

EX. ..... **6d.**

B. .....

EX. ..... **6d.**

B. .....

**NOVEL and VALUABLE SURPRISE BONUSES**

A novel Surprise Presentation accompanies each of this week's 30 Hamper Prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

Closing Postmark, **1,764** MON., JAN. 8

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O.

Value. .....

No. .....

Signed.....

Address.....

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**APPLY on this COUPON for "BULLETS" and XWORD GUIDE**

With this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) send P.O. 1s. for eight weeks' *Bulletin* and *Gazette* at REDUCED SERIES RATE. If requiring single copy only, affix 2½d. stamp below.

P.O. 1s. No.....

For Introductory copy of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Jan. 20

**STICK 2½d. STAMP HERE**

NAME .....

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.....

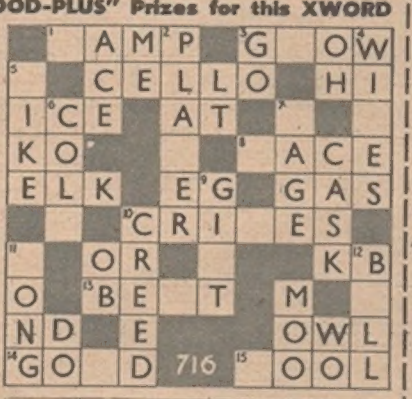
577

**£100 and "FOOD-PLUS" Prizes for this XWORD**

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Jan. 20.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.



| CLUE | EXTRA ANSWER | Total Fee |
|---|---|---|
| No. | | 6d. |
| No. | | 1s. |
| No. | | 2s. |

*(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)*

Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **716** Closing Postmark, Monday, Jan. 8

I enclose P.O. value.... No. .....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

plants, Mayor Padella began to climb the two hundred winding steps to the belfry. At the top he found Father Ignacio crouching against the parapet, panting weakly. He was surrounded by gold crucifixes, jewelled candelabras and other treasures he had tried to save.

"Well, Father!" Padella gave a wry grin. "It looks as if we are going to have to sit it out together!"

A smile flickered across Father Ignacio's face, too. "It is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you in my church, *Alcalde!* And I do not count this morning's ceremony."

As he spoke, the belfry shook and a thunderous crash from below announced that the lava had overrun the north wall. Almost immediately Padella felt something like sea-sickness, and Father Ignacio, with a cry, lurched against him.

The belfry was leaning at an angle of about fifteen degrees. The tension of waiting to see if it would lean farther made sleep impossible. Priest and unbeliever, Father Ignacio and Mayor Padella talked far into the night.

ALL next day the eruption continued half-heartedly. There was another night and a day before the Old Lady's rage was spent. The following dawn, Ramón and Paquita led the villagers up from Segarra to see all that was left of Montilla. A few roofs and the leaning tower of La Magdalena were visible. They and the cooling lava were drenched with merciful rain.

A great shout went up as two minute black figures were seen waving from the top of the belfry.

*"Olé, Padre! Olé, Alcalde!* Patience!"

It took six hours to rescue them. The villagers had to spread duckboards across the mud to reach the church. Padella appeared at the bottom of the tower carrying Father Ignacio in his arms. They took the old priest on a stretcher, for he was nearly unconscious from lack of food. There was something he was trying to say, but he could not get the words out.

Jolting down to Segarra in the truck, Father Ignacio opened his eyes. "Not the Angry Mountain," he murmured. "The mountain is life. There is no life without death, no creation without destruction. And every fresh generation must rebuild." His eyes looked from Ramón to Paquita.

A week later the villagers climbed up to the deserted village to the ruins of La Magdalena. The women wore their Sunday mantillas, the men their floppy black hats. Paquita leaned upon her father's arm. They all entered the church.

"I, Ramón Ortega Perez, take thee, Paquita Augustina Padella. . . ."

Behind the leaning belfry, the Old Lady's immense misty shape hung over them. Along her damaged crater, beneath a cotton-wool wisp of steam, was the first sugary sprinkling of autumn snow. THE END

Registered readers are notified that JOHN BULL'S Free Insurance Gift will continue in force, with the same benefits and conditions as apply at present, until December 31, 1951, unless previously terminated or amended by publication of notice in JOHN BULL. Registered readers automatically qualify for the benefits of the scheme. They need not re-register. But if any change of address or newsagent has taken place, full details must be sent to JOHN BULL Insurance Department, 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

## WELCOME FROM THE ABBEY GUESTMASTER

*Continued from page 11*

vocation for the monastic life. He returned to his practice for as long as it took him to repay his parents the outlay on his medical studies.

Though Father Virgilius's job requires his speaking to guests, he is not permitted to say a word to any of his colleagues, even during recreation. "There's a belief that we take a vow of absolute silence for life," he says. "That is not strictly correct. We may address either the abbot or the prior, and on certain rare occasions permission may be given to speak to visiting relatives." Father Virgilius himself, who has been a priest for seventeen years, has spent most of his life at Mount Melleray. He was educated at the abbey school and admitted to the monastery when he was nineteen. Soon he may be leaving and a new guestmaster will take his place.

Monks and brothers number about one hundred and fifty at Mount Melleray. They sleep in one great dormitory, on serried lines of plank beds separated by wooden partitions and covered with straw palliasses and coarse blankets; and they eat together in a long, high-ceilinged refectory, where meat, fish and eggs have never been served.

### "Our Lovely Refuge!"

Mount Melleray itself goes back only 117 years, to its foundation by Father Vincent Ryan. Few of the original buildings stand today, but the new abbey is perhaps the most popular monastery in Ireland. Mention of its name is enough to evoke lyrical poetry from the Irish—the way a normal, plain-speaking man in Youghal, describing it, blurted out unexpectedly: "That power house of the spirit; our lovely refuge; our crowning jewel; our beloved Mount Melleray!"

Years ago he had gone there because he had suddenly realized he was drinking too much and could do nothing about it. "I remember having my last drink at The Cats, on the main road, just before you turn off for the abbey," he recalls. "I did not take the pledge, because I didn't think I'd have the strength to keep it; but I've never touched whiskey from that day to this; stout, yes, but not whiskey." He remembers the Mount Melleray of twenty years ago, when whiskey was a few pennies a glass—an Irish glass—and if a man stayed at the abbey it was generally accepted that he had gone there because he had been drinking too much. Times have changed; one needs a fortune today to see mammoth rats and pink elephants; and Father Virgilius has only two guests who require his special care. But the notion lingers.

### Guest Who Slipped Away

A Jesuit from Dublin, the Director of the Pioneer Total Abstainers' Association, visited Mount Melleray two years ago. That evening a guest, there for the good of his health as well as his soul, slipped away unnoticed and returned later rather the worse for wear. He demanded a drink and the brother gave him one; he was demanding another when Father Virgilius came down. "Now look here, you'll have to be careful," he cautioned. "Do you know who is staying the night? The Director of the Pioneer Total Abstainers."

"Indeed?" said the guest. "Would he be as bad as I am?" THE END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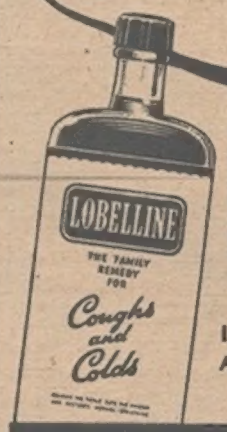


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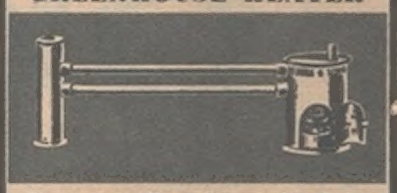

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# "Home Hints" Housewife gives New Whiteness Tip

Happy Hampstead housewife Lillian S. Linder (she writes free-lance articles on domestic problems) tells you how to give a sparkling new life to your whites every washday!

You've probably read in your paper some articles on household problems by Mrs. Lillian Linder, 20 Fortune Green Road, West Hampstead. Now she has hit on what she calls "the best washing hint ever"—for she has discovered the way to put sparkling *new life* into whites every washday—with this amazing new Oxydol!

Mrs. Linder thoroughly tests all her own hints. And she says: "I've found nothing else that gives this same sparkle, this new life to my whites!" That's because Oxydol now contains an amazing new washing-aid. It's *not* a bleach—not a harsh chemical. So not only does Oxydol get your whites whiter every time, it does it safely—without bleaching! Always ask for Oxydol. Put this new life into *your* whites!

**Room for two** on Mrs. Linder's big white bath towel as she and six-year-old Roger take a quick morning wash. And see how beautifully clean and white Mrs. Linder keeps her towels with Oxydol! "It's wonderful how Oxydol perks up your whites. It really puts *new life* into them!" she says. "That's why I always buy Oxydol!"

**Smart Boy,** smart Mummy. Mrs. Linder has found that Oxydol puts a fresh sparkle into coloureds, too. "That's why I trust Roger's shirts, my own dresses and all my coloureds only to Oxydol," she says. "It keeps colours fresh and lively wash after wash!"

...ith Trottie, the ...clothes ... on her ...kitchen shelf—Oxydol. "It's a tre... ...me rolling out with ...ng

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